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GROWING
TOWARDS
THE LIGHT

MRS. HENRY A. DOUDY



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GROWING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

By
MRS. HENRY A. DOUDY

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THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED TO
MRS. B. SANDERS,
OF
MOUNT BARKER, SOUTH AUSTRALIA,
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF
HER
ENCOURAGEMENT
AND AID.

1522995

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CHAPTER I

KANT'S THREE QUESTIONS

"A LADY in the drawing-room, m'am, to see you." Miss Wilson, the dear, old-fashioned principal of the "North Adelaide Academy for Young Ladies," with her Roman nose, her bobcurls kept in place each side of her face by tortoise-shell combs, and her funny little ambling walk, laid down the piece of embroidery she was inspecting. "Young ladies, while I am absent, I shall trust to your honour not to neglect your work. Miss Cohen, my dear, kindly read aloud to your fellow-pupils one of the articles in that new magazine on the desk yonder."

Julia Cohen, aged seventeen, a young Jewess, the oldest and tallest girl in the school, delighted in reading aloud, for she possessed a natural gift for elocution and the other pupils were always ready to listen to her. She had very strong and independent ideas on many subjects that were not usually considered interesting to girls, and her widowed father had not merely passively acquiesced in, but actively encouraged her study of them. She took up the book indicated and turned over the leaves.

"I don't see anything you would care much about girls," she said, after a minute's scanning of the contents.

"Isn't there any poetry?" inquired one.

"No, but here is something in history that may do; it is written by a lady."

While a buzz of conversation went on around her, she glanced down the page. "Stop talking, girls, listen to this," and when silence was obtained, she read in clear, deliberate tones that arrested attention—

“ ‘The sovereigns of all the countries, concerning which we are able to glean any information, number about 2,500, five per cent. of these were ranked as eminent or illustrious. At long intervals in almost every country appeared queens, numbering fifty-one. Nearly half of these were undisputably eminent or illustrious, some of them the best rulers their countries ever produced. Among those in the Eastern world were Semiramis of Babylon and Nitacris of the same country ; Hatespu of Egypt ; Deborah of Israel ; Artemisia of Salamis and the second Artemisia ; Zenobia of Palmyra. Passing to the Western world we have Boadicea, defying all the power of Rome and killing herself to avoid capture ; Margaret of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, a great sovereign and diplomatist, who reached a degree of power unequalled since Charlemagne ; Isabella the Second of Spain, to whose discernment of the genius of Columbus the world owes the discovery of—America ; our own Elizabeth, of whose greatness it is needless to speak ; Maria Theresa of Austria, of whom we read that she made great financial reforms, and that in her reign agriculture, commerce and manufacture flourished, and that the national revenue greatly increased ; Catherine the Second of Russia, no doubt a bad woman, but a great ruler ; our own Queen, Victoria, is fulfilling the promise of her youth, and will no doubt in future ages rank among the great and good rulers of the world.’ ”

Julia looked up with sparkling eyes. “ Haven’t I often told you that girls can learn as well as boys, that women should have a part in making laws, as well as in obeying them ? It is only justice. Do you notice, less than five per cent. of men sovereigns were ranked as eminent or illustrious, but fifty per cent. of women. Five kings out of a hundred, but fifty queens out of a hundred.

“ Oh ! ” remarked the pupil next in age, “ you will become one of those hateful strong-minded women, Julia, if you don’t take care, and have every one laughing at you.”

“ I want to be a strong-minded woman,” she answered

enthusiastically ; “ who would wish to be weak-minded ? Do you ? ”

“ Well, not weak-minded, of course, but it is not lady-like to want to vote ; and people will say you want to put on the——” and she paused delicately.

“ Trousers,” said Julia scornfully. “ What nonsense ! Women may have brains, and yet like to look nice, and the ugly garment you mentioned,” she said mendaciously, “ will never take the place of flowing drapery ; women are too fond of the beautiful for that. If you have not any better argument on your side, you had better say nothing.”

Another of the elder girls joined in : “ I heard my father and uncle saying the other day that women had produced no great thinkers or writers, and that therefore clearly showed their brains were not fitted to deal with deep subjects, such as politics ; and it would be ridiculous to give them the franchise.”

Julia was running her eyes again over the page in her hand. “ Here is a complete answer to that. Listen, girls : ‘ Women, like the Celtic race, have produced no great epics or tragedies or systems of philosophy ; but who wants to disenfranchise the Celtic race ? ’ And again : ‘ Those who are called upon to obey the laws should have a voice in shaping them ; those who pay taxes should have a voice in the expenditure. ’ And here is the summing up : ‘ If in any branch of human intelligence women are the equals of men, it is in the field of politics ; and yet they are carefully excluded from that, unless born princesses. On the whole, women are less often criminals than men. In the lump, women are better than men, though not so strong and not so clever. ’

“ Um ! not so strong and not so clever. Yes, but an ox or an elephant is stronger than a man. Not so clever ! The women mountain-peaks are not so high as the men mountain-peaks ; they have no Shakespeare nor Milton, nor Plato nor Bacon. No, but the average woman has as

good a brain as the average man, though different, as she is ordained to do different work in the world ; and best of all, women are better in the lump than men."

She was interrupted by Miss Wilson coming hurriedly in. "I am sorry I was so long, my dears. What have you been reading, Miss Cohen? Ah! I see. I scarcely agree with many of the writer's conclusions. Women, my dear, should keep within their own province, and a lady could never mingle in a crowd of rough men, fighting and shouting round a polling-booth; even throwing dead cats and bad eggs at their opponents, as was done, so I saw by the papers, at the last election. No, my dears, I hope to see you grow up good, refined ladies, incapable of coarseness or vulgarity. But I must take another opportunity of discussing this question; it is now past three o'clock, and time for dismissal."

So the twenty odd girls who formed the school collected books and pencils and woolwork and crochet and embroidery; needlework was not taught at the Academy, for it was considered only suitable for the Government schools, where children of the lower orders attended.

Anne Cassels, dark-eyed, curly-headed, was the youngest of the pupils, and she had been made a sort of pet since her advent there two years before—a wee mite of seven. She liked most of the girls, but Julia Cohen most of all. Her special affection for Julia dated back to a few months after her admission to the school. One afternoon when all but those pupils who attended the painting and drawing lessons were supposed to have dispersed, Julia, coming hastily into the cloakroom in search of a pencil she had left in the pocket of her overall, found a small child sobbing, with her face hidden in the identical garment that contained the missing article.

"Why! little Anne," she exclaimed, "what is the matter?"

But Anne would not answer; and it was only after a great deal of coaxing that she admitted the cause of her grief. Somehow or other it had grown to be the custom

for her to stay and watch the other girls having their drawing and painting lessons, and this day the customary invitation had been forgotten.

Julia rushed off and brought Miss Wilson, who took off Anne's hat, kissed the tear-stained cheeks, and led her back, abashed but joyful, to where the girls were at work. Anne's was a grateful nature, and she never forgot this little incident.

"May we go and practice for our skipping contest, please?" asked one of the pupils.

"Certainly, my dear; only do not play roughly, always remember you are young ladies."

So they went into the playground and divided into parties, swinging long ropes while the skippers took turns, and here and there a girl skipping alone with her own rope. When they grew tired of this, they played "Ticky-ticky Touchwood," and Anne ran so untiredly as to win encomiums from all.

"She is a good little thing," said Julia. "She is the youngest of us, and yet she never gives in. By the way," she went on, tilting back Anne's sunbonnet so as to see her face, "is it true that you have a new little brother come down from the sky?"

"Did he come from the sky?" asked Anne, opening her eyes. The doctor came to see him the other day, and when I asked him where baby came from, he said that was more than the wisest man knew."

A pale, thin girl was leaning against the fence. "Is'nt it queer," she said meditatively, "that not one of us was in the world a few years ago."

"Yes," said Julia, "it is funny. I, the eldest, am just seventeen, so that a little over seventeen years ago none of us were on the earth."

"And in a hundred years," went on the other, "none of us will be here, as I suppose we shall all have cleared off by that time. I wonder," looking slowly round, "where we shall be?"

"Perhaps in Mars, that planet we had a lesson on the

other day," answered Julia, laughing. "They say it is a world just like ours."

"Well, anyhow, it is getting late, and we had better trot home," remarked another girl, who posed as the wit of the school, "or our mas may make things unpleasant for us."

Amid much laughing the gathering melted away, and the pale girl, whose name was Louise Mitchell, daughter of the brewer who lived in the house on the opposite side of the lane to the Cassels, walked home as far as the gate with Anne.

The front door was closed, and Anne opened it gently, according to the instructions of the past week; and seeing the nurse sitting in a low chair with a little white bundle on her lap, went towards her; but with finger on her lip, the woman whispered, telling her to run out and play, for Mrs. Cassels was asleep, and so was the new arrival, now reposing on her knee. So putting down her school satchel, she wandered across the terrace to the Parklands, where a favourite log seat, shaped something like an armchair through the way its limbs had once grown, was lying. Here she seated herself and looked down at the long, dried grass which almost hid the tiny April spears that were thrusting themselves up through the soil. A week ago a momentous event had happened. She had been roused in the early morning by her father's voice saying, "Wake up, Anne, I have something to show you, but you must be very quiet." Then he took her by the hand and led the white-clad, barefooted little figure into her mother's room. There was a strange woman moving softly about, folding up some of the tiny clothes that Anne had occasionally been allowed to dress her dolls in, and which she knew she had herself worn when a baby. Surprised, she looked towards the bed, and saw her mother gazing at her with smiling eyes, but pale face. Then when she ran to the side of the bed, Mrs. Cassels had, without speaking, turned down the bedclothes, and there, to Anne's unbounded astonishment, was a little black, downy head.

Her exclamations and rapture were cut short by the nurse. Since then, however, she had nursed the small wonder ; Jessie, too, had been allowed to hold him, and even Hugh had not disdained to test his brother's weight. And the children had all been wonderfully good ; so bound together by the new tie that self for a time was forgotten.

Oh, the marvel of a new baby ! The sweet little rosy toes, that curl up so comically ; the darling tiny fingers that clutch at one's heart ; the sleepy eyes, that peep out at a world new-made for them ; the soft downy cheeks and chubby neck, that one is never tired of kissing ; the rosebud mouth, that drops treasures more precious than pearls and diamonds ! Of all the marvels of this wondrous earth, are you, baby, not the acme and the crown !

The tumult awakened in Anne's mind by the coming of the little brother, and the speculation and bewilderment to which it had given rise, had been accentuated and focussed by the conversation that afternoon between Julia and Louise. Her mother had told her that the baby had come from God ; was that what Julia meant when she said he had come from the sky, and if he came from the sky what had he been doing there ?

She herself had been a baby once, and Hugh and Jessie, and even her father and mother. Why ! old Miss Wilson, astounding thought, had been a baby once ! And did all the babies in the world live in the sky before they were babies here ? Thought became very confused, and stooping, she pulled up impatiently some of the long, dried grass beside her, and then picking up a short stick, began turning up the brown earth and smoothing it with her foot. Then she stopped and gazed into vacancy, and her mind struggled to find shape for the speculations that puzzled and baffled her.

"None of the girls who had been running about the playground, laughing and singing and full of life, would," they said, "be here in a hundred years." A hundred years was a long, long time ; but it would, of course, come to an

end, incredible as it seemed ; for the history lessons that the professor gave the girls told of what men and women did hundreds of years, yes, even thousands of years ago, and the Bible told of people who lived thousand of years back. Where were all those men and women? And where would she, and all the other schoolgirls, be in a hundred years from now? Would they go back to the same place they lived in before they were Australian babies? She put out her foot, and smoothed the brown earth to and fro, seeming to gaze intently at it, though in reality she saw nothing.

"I was a baby once," she said aloud, returning to her former thought. Then, with the stick in her hand, she began writing on the smooth brown soil the sentence she had uttered. I—she wrote in her best hand; then stopped and stared at the letter she had formed. "I—what is 'I'? Has the baby got an 'I'? 'I suppose he has, for every one says 'I,' so they must all have them. 'I'—that means 'me'; what is 'me'?" She stretched out her hand and regarded it thoughtfully. "'Me,' can't be my hand, for that boy who had his hand and arm blown off the other day when they were blasting tree stumps on the Parklands is getting all right, Hugh says, though his hand has gone.

"'Me,' can't be my legs," she pinched one. "No, I saw a man walking on two wooden legs, and he had a 'me' somewhere I s'pose.

"I wonder if 'me' is in my head. No, I don't believe it is, for if I shut my eyes my 'me' knows, and a blind person has a 'me.' If I had all my teeth pulled out, and my hair cut off and my nose and my ears, I should be 'me' all the same I s'pose.

"How funny! a lot of 'mes' walking about, and I suppose none of them know where their 'mes' are. P'raps though very wise men and women know. I feel as if my 'me' was shut up in a little house and kept looking out of the windows, and wanting to get out and see the other 'mes.'"

Two boys came into sight between the trees ; they were her brother Hugh and Laurie Leigh, grandson of Mrs. Johnstone, the public-house keeper.

"Halloa ! Anne, where is Jessie ? " shouted Hugh.

"Went to the Mitchells' to spend the day," she called.

"We are going to play cricket, and you can come too, if you like," he added graciously, "only you must make haste."

He hurried off ; but Anne did not stir, and Laurie lingered beside her, calling after Hugh that he would not be long.

"You are a funny little mite," he said, sitting down at the end of the log ; "what are you doing here all by yourself ? "

"Oh ! only thinking," she replied, turning her eyes downward to where "I" was traced.

"Thinking ! About what ? "

It took considerable perseverance on Laurie's part to induce her to give any clue to the puzzled labyrinth in which her mind was struggling. She was naturally very reserved about her deepest thoughts, and the difficulty of trying to express them also hampered her, but at length he gained some idea of the direction in which they tended.

"The Bible says God made us, and that we are spirits, and that when we die we go to heaven or hell."

"I know all about that," interrupted Anne impatiently. "That isn't what I mean at all. I mean how are we going to find out without the Bible."

"'Whence come I ? What am I ? Whither do I go ? '" he quoted.

"Yes," said Anne, looking at him with parted lips.

"Yes, that is it, go on."

"Our German master, Herr Baumann, made us learn that, and it has come in handy now. But I don't know much about it, only that an old German man, named Kant, was thinking about those questions all his life, and wrote a book about them."

"Yes," said Anne again, eagerly. "Go on, what did he say about them?"

"I wish I could remember as you want to know," answered Laurie. "But I didn't care much about it, and," he added penitently, "I wish I had now."

"You must remember something," said Anne, getting up and stamping her foot. "Not care about it! I never heard anything so silly. Not want to know where you came from, or where you are going, or what your 'me' is!" and she looked at him with indignation.

"It isn't that I would not like to know," he answered, stung by her contemptuous tone, "but I never thought about it. I did not take notice."

"Stupid," she muttered, turning from him and sitting down. Then she took up her stick, and dug up the "I" viciously, muttering, "You must be stupid."

Laurie was goaded into picking up his satchel, and remarking sarcastically: "As I am so stupid I will go, as I can't be fit company for Miss Cassels."

Anne dropped her stick, and started up. "Oh! don't take any notice, Laurie. Stop a minute and see if you can't remember something more Herr Baumann said. Do try."

Thus adjured, Laurie, half reluctantly, put down his satchel. He took off his cap and gazed inside it, as if seeking inspiration there, then stuck it on his finger, and twirled it round and round, while Anne bent on him earnest expectant eyes.

"Oh! I know now," he said in about a minute, with a relieved air, "Kant didn't know anything about it at all, and could not find out."

"How old was he did you say?" demanded Anne in an amazed tone.

"I did not say; but he was about ninety when he died."

"And he was trying to find out for ninety years, and then couldn't. Why, he must have been stupid."

"Well, he wasn't the only stupid. There were lots

of the old Greeks and Romans—Socrates and Plato, and Marcus Aurelius and—lots of others,” ended Laurie somewhat vaguely.

“I know all about Socrates and Plato, but not the other men. Father has a book all about Socrates, that he got for a school prize, and I have read it twice. I know all about what a temper his wife had, and how he used to eat very little and dress in old clothes and go without boots, and how they made him drink poison at last. But I never knew he wanted to find out where he came from, and those things, though there was a lot of talks with Plato that I skipped.”

“You needn’t grumble at me then, for not noticing much about Herr Baumann’s lecture,” said Laurie triumphantly.

“Well, but I wasn’t thinking about things like that when I read the book.”

“And I wasn’t either, when Herr Baumann lectured. I will ask him about it if you like.”

“Very well. But you were different, it was your lesson and you ought to have listened. I shall ask father too, I expect he knows.”

Laurie wanted to correct her pronunciation, but saw she was not in the mood to bear it patiently. She got up and Laurie followed suit.

“Oh dear!” she exclaimed, sighing deeply, “the world’s very puzzledom.”

“Puzzling, you mean,” interposed Laurie; he really could not let this pass.

“No, I don’t, I mean puzzledom,” she said snappishly; for her bewilderment and disappointment had made her irritable, and when she was annoyed she generally stuck to what she said, right or wrong. Laurie looked at her with raised eyebrows, but held his peace.

“Women are ever so much cleverer than men,” she announced suddenly. “I know all about it now.”

“Do you; how do you know?”

“Why the queens of all the countries in the world are

ever so much cleverer than kings, so that shows," and she nodded her head at him emphatically. "Julia Cohen read it, and you can find out for yourself in history, and I am going to tell Hugh to-night. If women tried to answer those questions you told me, they would find it out better than men; men are so stupid."

"Don't you think there are any stupid women then?" asked Laurie; but she did not deign an answer.

When they came to the church acre, he joined the boys playing cricket, and as Anne turned up the lane, Louise Mitchell, with a basket on her arm, was coming down it.

"Mrs. Muir is dead," she said; "she died this afternoon."

Anne stood still; her startled mind again went back to the train of thought which had been occupying it. Mrs. Muir had gone away, where they were all going. Where, oh where, could it be?

She passed through the gate and entered the house. No one was in the sitting-room, but a murmur of voices came from her mother's apartment, and she softly entered. Little Jessie was sitting beside the bed, putting down her face every now and then to touch with her lips the precious little brother, who was cuddled up on his mother's arm.

"Mother," said Anne, "Mrs. Muir is dead."

"Poor woman," sighed Mrs. Cassels pitifully, "her sorrows are at an end. Nurse has just gone over to inquire, for we thought she could not last out the day."

Jessie began to weep. "You should not cry, Jessie dear," said her mother, caressing the child's fair hair. Mrs. Muir is far happier now than she could ever be in this world, for she is in heaven."

Jessie lifted her head. "Is she an angel now, and got wings so that she can fly about?"

"I think so, dear, or something like that."

"And a white dress, and some music to play?"

Being assured on both these points, she dried her eyes; but suddenly a thought struck her. "Oh, but mother,

p'raps she is not gone to heaven at all ; p'raps she's gone to hell, and she might not be so comfortable there."

It was some time before this spectre could be laid at rest. Anne took no part in the discussion, but presently she said in a low voice—

"How do you know there is a heaven and a hell, mother ? "

"Because the Bible tells us so," answered Mrs. Cassels with a startled look.

"Isn't there any other way of knowing, mother ? Only what the Bible says ? "

"No, dear, not for certain ; but that is enough for those who believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again."

Anne sat gravely still, listening to Jessie's prattle and her mother's replies. She did not even laugh when Jessie began to speculate as to whether Mrs. Muir would put on her gold crown outside her sunbonnet, or the sunbonnet over the crown. The little maid rather inclined to the former theory, for Mrs. Muir had rheumatism in her face, and she had liked her sunbonnet to fit close.

The first time Anne and her father were alone she asked him about Kant's three questions. The old German philosopher had few English readers at that time ; but Mr. Cassels was one of the few.

* He told her as Laurie had done, that Kant's whole life had been spent in trying to find out whether reason alone could shed any light on the eternity past and the eternity to come. The philosophers of bygone ages had held that this might be possible ; but Kant came to the conclusion, and demonstrated it very plainly in his writings, that his first and third questions could never be answered.

His second question, "What am I ? " could be partly solved, by studying the *me* within. Anne learned the *me* was called by philosophers the *ego*, a Latin name for it.

Her father also told her that Kant had likened each ego to a man dwelling on a small islet, surrounded by a dark unfathomable ocean, which extended on all sides into the dim far-away distance. By means of his five senses he

could reach to the edge of his little islet, but not a jot beyond ; the mysterious, imcomprehensible ocean encompassed and shut him in, and forbade his ever possessing *knowledge* of anything but what his five senses taught him.

There was one bridge, and only one, Kant averred, by means of which the unfathomable darkness could be crossed. *Faith* alone could bridge it, and give visions of a land where every wrong must be righted, the sorrowful made glad, the hopeless filled with joy, the slave of vileness set free.

Anne listened, half apprehending what her father said, half mystified.

"Then we can't find out anything about where we go when we die, but what the Bible tells us, father, nor where we came from either?"

"No, my child, or very little. The men who wrote the Bible were given more light on those subjects than all the rest of mankind put together. Still, every now and then, thinking men arise, who, by looking at and meditating on the ego within themselves, and observing and inquiring concerning the egos of those surrounding them, have been able to tell us much that is probable, though nothing for certain. In my opinion such men are as truly inspired by God as were the writers of the Old and New Testaments, though in a different manner and degree. God, who created us, alone knows all, the beginning and the end, and from Him only can light come."

He looked at Anne curiously, as he had often done before ; for it seemed strange that so young a child should already have awakened to an interest in what has moved the profound thought of all the ages, and he wondered how much of what he had told her she really comprehended.

"Then what was the use of all those old men bothering, and trying to find out things they couldn't?"

"In one sense, none at all, for nothing can be learned by reason, except what the five senses of our little islet teach us. At the same time, some people are born with minds so constituted that they cannot be satisfied until

they have tried for themselves whether there is anything to be learned outside revelation concerning the momentous subjects of life and death."

"To such Kant has rendered an inestimable service by showing us our bounds, by proving that the thinking ego can only learn anything that constitutes knowledge, when brought face to face with the subject thought about. It cannot be brought face to face except by means of the five senses, and this bringing together we call experience. Now it is impossible for us to know by experience anything of what is the beginning of life, or what death really is, therefore it is no use wasting time in trying to find out."

Anne's face showed her disappointment. "But wouldn't it be nice to know, father?"

"Yes, but we cannot. We must learn to acquiesce in the inevitable—and wait."

"Wait for what, father?"

"For death, old girl, the Great Teacher."

Anne's eyes grew large.

"There is no need to fear it, dear. What we call death is really only a stepping out of one life into another." He paused and looked yearningly at the little face uplifted to his, then added, half to himself, half to her: "The parting from those we love is the bitterness of it; but we must remember that the reunion will make up for that a thousand times. What are a few days and months of this life compared with the millions of days and months of eternity. Only a drop in the ocean, a leaf from the forest."

CHAPTER II

THE CASSELS FAMILY

IT was a little white cottage where the Cassels lived, and it had gable ends and a porch. Over the latter, a wild rose and native lilac were trained, and the long graceful sprays of the snowy-white lilac blossom mingled with the pink cups of the rose, for it was now one of the loveliest months of the Adelaide year, August.

The porch faced west. Enclosing a tiny slip of flower garden was a low paling fence and a small white gate. A large date palm grew on one side of the porch and a tall aloe on the other; under the palm was a seat formed of portion of the sawn-off trunk of a huge gum tree, that had been growing there when white men first set foot on Australian soil. At the back and along the north side of the house was a yard, and further still a vegetable garden and small orchard, where almond trees were in full bloom. In the yard was a shed, gabled like the house, with whose roof, and the branches of wattle that overhung it, Anne was well acquainted. The great wattle tree was now a mass of golden fuzzy balls, filling the air with delicious perfume.

The white cottage was built on Pennington Terrace, which lies at the foot of the hill that North Adelaide—then a straggling village—stands on, and faces part of the belt of Park lands which, through the wisdom and foresight of Colonel Light, to whom South Australia is for ever indebted, engirdle the city. Between the city itself and North Adelaide the river Torrens ran, and in the south and south-east the slopes of the Mount Lofty

range formed a glorious background to the intervening plain, through which the river wended its way to the western gulf, between wheat fields, and vineyards, and primeval forest land.

"There now, father will be pleased when he sees it," and Anne held up in front of her the piece of rough drawing-paper on which she was trying to reproduce an outline of the cottage.

"The chimney is just like it," she continued murmuring to herself, her head on one side, "with tops to them like ours; they look so pretty against the blue sky. I do like drawing chimneys; but I can't do the creeper a bit, it only looks like sticks. I shall have to rub it out, and my bread crumbs are all dirty. I will leave it, and go on with the windows."

She was sitting on a log beside the wood heap at the bottom of the yard; a deal box did duty as a table, and on it were spread her paper, two pencils, and a little pile of soiled bread crumbs. On the ground beside her lay her white sunbonnet, and propped up on the wood sat a wax doll, dressed in pink; it also had a sunbonnet, in front of which its fair curls fell.

Some little grey birds flew overhead, and lighting on the wattle tree, began calling to one another with melodious whistle. Anne counted the nine flute-like notes that one bird gave, and then repeated them in a sweet clear voice, the bird answering her time after time; until a black cat coming stealing round the shed, leapt suddenly on a low branch, and the flock, espying him, flew away.

There was a creaking of heavy wheels, and a loud cracking of whip, and the driver's voice, geeing and hawing. Anne jumped, for a moment, on the wood pile to see a bullock wagon go slowly lumbering by, drawn by a long team of fat sleepy-looking bullocks.

The little artist, as she worked, sang gaily part of an operatic air she had learned from her father; until black Pamela, with her piccaninny slung on her back, came into the yard.

"Please give me some bed and sooger," she whined, then showed her white teeth in a smile. Anne ran inside, and presently returned with the desired dainties and a biscuit for the baby, whose great black eyes and long lashes she stood admiring, while she asked Pamela if she were coming to help wash the next week.

Before returning to her drawing Anne took up her doll, kissed it, tied its bonnet strings afresh, and with a "I will soon be finished, dear," put it back on its seat. Then she picked up her pencil, and as she became absorbed in her work, fell into silence. The joy of creating was upon her, and half an hour passed quickly, when a scrambling noise at the fence made her look up, just as a boy's head appeared over the top. It was something like Anne's, but of less pronounced colouring, and belonged to her brother Hugh.

"Hi! Nan, hurry up and come and play cricket. Laurie has not come and Jessie is no good, she can't run fast enough, and I've been waiting for you for ever so long."

"Wait a bit, Hugh, till I've just finished my drawing. I won't be long; and I wish you wouldn't keep calling me 'Nan,' 'Anne' is ugly enough."

"No, I can't wait," he said, not replying to the remonstrance about the name. "I've bin waiting ever so long. What do you want to be doing that rubbish for?"

"It isn't rubbish, and if you say it is, I won't play cricket at all."

"Won't you? Well, if you don't come quick, I'll get over and upset all your old things," said Hugh, half laughingly, half angrily."

There was no reply.

"Hi! Are you coming? Very well, Miss Sulky," and Hugh drew himself up to the top of the fence, jumped down, and putting his foot against the box, pushed it over. His sister had seized her precious drawing, but exasperated at seeing her pencils flying into the woodheap, she ran up to him, just as he stooped to kick the box again, and gave him a smart slap on the cheek. As she was

about to repeat the process, he turned and grasped her arm, saying teasingly, "Oh! the little tiger, Nan, she'll fight, will she?"

"Children," called a voice behind them, "quarrelling again. For shame! Go indoors at once, Anne, and look after baby; and you, Hugh, fill that box with chips. I shall want them for the oven."

"But, mother," said Anne, "it wasn't my fault; he came and kicked over my box when I was drawing, just because I wouldn't leave off and play cricket with him."

"She hit me," muttered Hugh; but he had the grace to look ashamed.

"I didn't, till he kicked my things over."

"That will do, both of you. Go in, Anne, and lay the table for tea."

Anne, very unwillingly, picked up her pencils, sun-bonnet and doll, and followed her mother.

"You should try and get the mastery of your temper, Anne, or you will grow up into a quarrelsome woman, whom every one will dislike."

"But, mother, I didn't do anything till he came and——"

"Girls should be forgiving and gentle, and ready to sacrifice themselves for others."

"I don't see why girls should be forgiving any more than boys. It doesn't say in the Bible that girls should be gentle and boys needn't," muttered Anne, as she set the cups and plates in order in the sitting-room, while her mother was busy in the kitchen.

A sense of injustice burned within her. "Hugh," she said to herself, "is only a year older, but just because he is a boy and I am a girl, I am expected to give way to him."

The brother and sister really loved each other, but they were both fiery-tempered children, with imperious wills, and somehow or other Hugh had got an exalted opinion of his own sex and its right to dominate, which his sister resented with all her strength.

"Where is Jessie?" asked Mrs. Cassels, as she lifted

the lid of the small stew-pan, from which issued a savoury smell. "Out on the acre? Run and bring her in, tea will be ready soon."

Anne went through the open door in the porch, from thence through the gate into the lane that led to where Mitchells, the brewer's family lived, and to the Quaker meeting-house. She walked slowly towards the terrace, then stood and looked about her, first to west, then to south and east. An expression of delight took the place of the unhappy one overclouding her countenance, for Nature, the great comforter, spoke to her child.

The sun had sunk below the horizon, but the afterglow made gorgeous the whole heaven, for the floating clouds were masses of vermillion, and the gates of the west were golden. In the south and east, the slopes of the Mount Lofty range had become a delicate mauve and pink, with purple shadows lying between, the colours etherialized by a silvery veil of faintest mist.

The child drew a deep breath, and tears gathered slowly in her eyes as she gazed. A sense of something vast and mighty filled her being, and drove into the background the pettiness of the present.

The cottage was separated from the city road by a paddock, commonly called the "Church acre," and towards it, after drinking in the beauty of earth and sky, Anne turned her steps. She stopped at the post and rail fence, and called to Jessie, who was playing with two little kids belonging to a black and white goat tethered near.

"Yes, Anne," answered the child, but she did not come, for she was fixing a wreath of wattle blossom round the neck of one of the kids, and the recipient of her favours was somewhat restive.

Leaning against the fence, Anne fell into a reverie. She wondered, as she had often done before, what the cathedral would be like that was to be built there some day, close to the plain meeting-house, towards which sweet-faced, Quaker ladies, in dove-coloured, quaint-shaped bonnets and dresses to match, and snowy kerchiefs about their necks,

walked up the lane every Sunday, beside gentlemen in drab costumes and broad-brimmed hats.

Would the great building take generations of toilers hundreds of years to complete, like some of the cathedrals in Europe of which her father had told her, and where would she, Anne, be, when the topmost fretwork of stone lifted itself far above? Would she be in a world where girls were as well off as boys, or would she always have to be punished for the accident of birth, as she had heard some one call it. She did not make herself a girl, so why should she be always expected to give up to Hugh, who though a boy was no better than herself, as far as she could see? And at this point tears filled her eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

"What, blubbing! Well, you are a baby," said Hugh's voice, close beside her. "I suppose you are wild because I just knocked over your old box. Well, it was your fault. Why didn't you come and play cricket?"

"I had as much right to kick over your wicket, and I will too if you don't mind," said Anne, facing him with eyes whose fire had dried up the tears.

"Will you? I'd just like to see you do it," returned Hugh.

He had run after her with some idea of making up their quarrel, but now his temper flashed up at the suggestion of the possibility of paying him back in his own coin.

"Yes, I will. You are a horrid boy, always trying to bully me, just because I am a girl," and Anne hastily mopped with her pinafore the tears which started afresh.

Hugh again tried to substantiate his position.

"Well, why don't you do as I tell you? Girls ought to do as they are told."

"Ought they? Who says so? Hugh Cassels, I suppose?" and Anne pushed out her lower lip and nodded her head tauntingly.

"You don't know much about your Bible, if you don't know that. It says, 'Wives, obey your husbands.' I saw it the other day, and that shows women have to

knuckle under, and it always says about the men being born, and nothing about the women."

"I don't believe wives obey their husbands. I heard Mrs. Mitchell tell Mr. Mitchell out in the garden not to talk, unless he could talk sense; and father never makes mother do anything she doesn't want. Besides, wives isn't sisters, and men wrote the Bible, so they only put their own names in."

"That's a nice way to talk about the Bible, miss," said Hugh in shocked tones. "It's God's Book, you know well enough, and men only wrote as God told 'em."

Anne did not answer; so he went on, "Why, in all the story-books too, they always talk of how glad they are when a son and heir is born. How is that, if men ain't best?"

"If one goose sets to cackle, a lot of geese always cackle with them."

"That's always the way with you; you never will keep to what I'm talking of. I'm talking of men and you begin talking of geese."

"There isn't much difference," said Anne with a scowl.

"Isn't there, miss? Very well, I'll ask father about that and see what he says. All the row's through your selfishness; if you'd come and played cricket when I wanted you, there would not have been any."

"Cackle, cackle," and Anne stuck her lower lip out at him again and walked off, for Jessie had at last left the goats, and came scrambling under the fence. The little fair-faced girl caught hold of her sister's hand, and Hugh followed sulkily.

"Come, children," said their mother, "make haste, tea is ready." She was filling three small, deep tin plates with the savoury gravy of the stew.

After grace was said, Anne took up her plate in one hand, and a slice of bread in the other, and walking towards a low window which opened beside the porch, sat down on the sill.

"Child," said Mrs. Cassels, "why do you not sit properly

at the table, instead of always wanting to ramble about ? I saw you on the shed roof again ; that is very unladylike, and very dangerous too."

" Oh ! mother, do let me sit here, the trees and houses look so pretty against the sky."

The mother smiled to herself, but made no further comment ; and presently Hugh took up his plate and also established himself on the sill. The two sat side by side, swinging their legs outward every now and then, and neither of them speaking.

Anne's eyes were fixed on the horizon line of the rising ground in front. The outline of a house on Montefiore Hill, of the Anglican church and adjoining Bishop's Court, showed almost black in the waning light, and a star came twinkling out and trembled above the tops of the young gum trees, whose crowns of many colours were lifted high by their upright slender shafts on the opposite side of the lane.

Little Jessie chatted with her mother, but the two in the window sill were silent. Hugh wished his sister would speak, and cast about in his mind for something to say. It never struck him that he might acknowledge himself in the wrong, that would be too much to expect ; but he found the present state of affairs uncomfortable ; besides, he wanted a new marble bag, and he couldn't ask her to make it while she kept her mouth shut tight and would not even look at him.

" Mudder," came Jessie's lisping voice. " Tell me again, mudder."

" The book says, ' I am a little soldier, and only five years old.' "

" How tan a book speak, mudder ? It doesn't, an' beside, little durls mussen't be tolders."

Hugh drew his legs up, and swung them over into the room. Then he carried his empty plate to the table and took up his mug of weak tea. He was turning back when a second thought struck him, and he lifted Anne's mug of tea, and carrying it to her held it out silently.

Her mouth relaxed as she received it from him, and said "Thank you," in a low voice.

Again they sat silent side by side for a minute or two. Hugh cudgelled his brains for something to say that would prove acceptable to his sister.

"Do you think father will bring a book home to-night?"

A light came into Anne's face. "I don't know, but I expect he will; he does most Saturdays," she answered slowly.

"That last was a good one, about the swan's egg getting into the goose's nest, wasn't it? What duffers the geese were to think the cygnet was ugly, till the princess came and said it was a grand young swan, and took it away to live in the lake by her castle."

Anne's eyes sparkled, "Wouldn't it be lovely to be a princess and live in a castle?"

"Oh! I don't know. I wouldn't care about being a king or a prince. In the histories they don't seem to have much fun. When they're kids they have to learn lessons till all's blue; and when they're old buffers, always being jabbed at with swords and knives, or having shots and bullets shied at 'em."

"But some of them don't. Look at Alfred the Great, every one loved him."

"I expect lots of 'em tried to murder him, only they kept it dark. Don't you believe they tell you about it every time. If they did no one would be fool enough to be kings and queens, you bet. I wish some one *had* murdered him," continued Hugh viciously, "he wouldn't have set up so many schools then, horrid old beast, and then perhaps fellows wouldn't have to stew as much now. When I get into Parliament I shall abolish school. I wish I had been born in Corea, you can spell as you like there, as long as you show the sounds, and they haven't got all the stuff about masculines and feminines and declining and all that nonsense. Old Young kept me in to-day because I put down 'masculine, hour'; feminine, minute; and declined ill, more ill, dead, as if it mattered a bit.

People get dead all the same, if you don't decline 'em right."

Hugh's sentiments met with scant favour from Anne.

"I only wish I could go to school always instead of you, as you don't like it," she said contemptuously.

"What 'ud be the use? Girls want to learn to cook and sew, and besides you couldn't do euclid and algebra and Latin; that's what old Young keeps us stewing at."

"Why couldn't I?"

"Because girls can't learn things like that."

"But why can't they?"

"Because they can't, stupid; they haven't got brains enough."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Anne decisively; "I can understand things as well as you, though you're more than a year older than I am, and what did I tell you about the queens Julia Cohen read of?"

"You've never tried mathematics and Latin, so now; drawing and reading, and things like that are easy."

"If drawing is so easy, why don't you do it then?"

"So I could if I wanted, only I don't want. I couldn't be bothered fiddling about it," said Hugh loftily. Then he remembered the marble bag, and added cunningly, "But I can't sew, boys never can; and I do wish you would make me a new marble bag, Anne, the bottom all came out of mine, and I won a lot to-day, and two glasses, real butes; come inside and I'll show you."

They jumped down and went to where the oil lamp shed its light over the table. Glasses were not very plentiful in Adelaide in those days, and were proportionately dear, so the children enthusiastically admired the opaque blue one with bands of white, and still more the crystal sphere with a spiral pink, green and yellow inside; wondering how the little "staircase," as Anne called it, got into the middle.

Anne helped her mother to clear the table and wash up the tea-things, then sat down to make the marble bag, Hugh

on one side, advising and directing, Jessie on the other, spinning on a tray little gum cups, as the children called them. They were made from the calyx of gum blossom, and filled with variously coloured sealing wax. The quarrel was forgotten, and Anne happy once more.

Hugh was far more forgiving than his sister, not because he consciously combated his anger with greater vigour than she did, but because his nature was far less tenacious. Often after a difference between them, when his sister met him an hour later with frowning brow and set lips, he felt badly used. He could scarcely remember what it had all been about, because impressions quickly effaced each other in his own more shallow mind. So he called her bad-tempered and sulky, pluming himself on his much better disposition; whereas he was merely heedless and thoughtless, both in provoking quarrels and in forgetting them afterwards.

Mrs. Cassels brought a pile of clothes needing mending, and sitting down opposite to her children, with the cradle at her foot, began fixing a patch on a small garment. Every now and then she glanced lovingly at the three bright faces, and mingled in their gay talk. She was a delicate-looking woman, with rather a sad expression in her grey eyes when her face was at rest, and a thread of silver could be seen here and there in her brown hair. She missed the comforts and refinements of English life, while her health was not sufficiently robust to stand unimpaired the hard work and worry incidental to the wife of a poor colonist.

Mr. Cassels had been a partner with his two brothers, in a rather large drapery firm in London. The young men had embarked in the business a considerable sum of money that came to them by inheritance. Andrew was of a dreamy unpractical nature, and the other brothers inclined to be extravagant, so the sequel was a foretold one.

Out of the wreck, Andrew Cassels saved enough to pay the passage to Australia of himself and his young wife;

and had £200 in hand when they landed. Mrs. Cassels saw that the colony held within itself the elements of tremendous growth and expansion, and that a little judicious management of their capital might lay the foundation of a fortune. Land within the bounds of the future city could have been bought very cheaply, and she wished to invest their capital in that way ; but her husband could not be persuaded to agree with her. It would necessitate too long waiting, he thought, and instead nearly half their money went to buy a share in a dairy which was warranted to begin paying a hundred per cent. at once ; while he obtained a situation in a store.

He could scarcely tell one cow from another, and was astonished to hear a week after his money was paid, that all the animals had gone dry. The next news was, that the working partner had disposed of the cows to a butcher, pocketed the money and vanished.

Then the gold fever broke out in Victoria, and he determined to try his fortune. A considerable part of the funds left went to buy a digger's outfit and pay travelling expenses ; on the rest Mrs. Cassels was to subsist until her husband gained the fortune he so confidently expected.

He was absent a year, and during that time sent, by the police escort, several small parcels of gold to his wife. But fortune was so moderate in her favours that he tired of the gold-fields, and returned home.

The Adelaide hills were becoming peopled by tillers of the soil, who had discovered the richness of the gully flats, and he thought that a trade in drapery might be opened up in the district. He was not a strong man, and his wife vainly endeavoured to persuade him to buy a horse and spring-cart which a friend offered him on easy terms, and with which he could have conveyed his goods. But as he had not sufficient cash in hand to pay at once, he would not go into debt, which was abhorrent to his soul ; so he decided to start with a pack, and when he had money enough, buy the conveyance.

Unaccustomed to manual labour, his health had been

weakened by the hard life of a digger, and toiling up steep hills with a heavy pack on his back was one of the worst things he could have undertaken. An injury to his spine resulted, and for a long time he was unable to stand; then health slowly returned, and he obtained a situation as bookkeeper in a large mercantile firm. But the expenses incidental to sickness left them in debt, and the burden fell heavily on the wife and mother. The constant round of housework, the making and mending, told on her nerves and strength, and seemed at times more than she could bear, especially when Hugh and Anne quarrelled, as they often did. Then she silenced the one most easily controlled; which course tended to make Hugh more self-assertive and Anne smart under a sense of injustice.

The cottage in which the Cassels lived had originally been built for one of the principal Government officials, and legend told that the first governor had resided within it for a short period until a more pretentious residence was erected for him. There were more conveniences than similar buildings at that time usually boasted. Though the rooms were very small there were enough of them, and there was a tiny dressing-room off Mrs. Cassels' bedroom, and beside the detached kitchen, a bathroom, where a movable shower-bath hung. It was a secret delight to Anne to think that a representative of the Queen of England had been used to dine within the simply furnished room with its white-washed walls, where they sat together at meals; and that a redcoated sentry had marched up and down in front of what was now their porch.

When the marble bag was completed, Hugh and Anne played spinning gum-cups with Jessie. Each chose a colour, and tried to keep the cup containing it revolving longest upright on its little stem.

Jessie began to give prodigious yawns. "It is bed-time, dears," said Mrs. Cassels. "You, Anne, help Jessie undress while I see to your father's supper; he will be in soon."

The room belonging to the little sisters opened out of

the one used as a dining and sitting-room, as Hugh's did on the opposite side, for there were no passages.

Directly Jessie's night-gown was on, she began to climb into her little white bed. "Say your prayers first," reminded Anne.

"I'm so tired, I tant to-night."

"That is naughty; just say, 'Gentle Jesus,' or God won't love you."

"Oh, tell Him I tant be boddered to-night," and Jessie resolutely snuggled under the bedclothes.

Mrs. Cassels came in presently to kiss and tuck them up. "Tell father not to forget," said Anne, as her mother extinguished the home-made tallow candle.

Jessie was soon asleep, but Anne, as was her wont, lay awake for some time after going to bed. She was a weaver of dreams, and always looked forward to the period between waking and sleeping, when she lived in romantic scenes of which Anne was always the central figure; but of these dreams she had never given a hint, not even to her mother.

She could not remember when they began, but she did recollect that at first the subject-matter was her doll. She used to imagine she had found the way to make it speak and walk, and astonished every one with her cleverness, when dolly, at her command, walked off down the terrace asking for toffee, which when given to her she handed to her mistress.

Then Anne became a circus rider, such as her father described he had seen in London. She rode ponies with flowing manes and tails, and electrified the audience by her daring.

Then she found out the way to fly, explaining to the lookers-on the ease with which her feats were accomplished. She circled over the houses and trees, or perhaps took a flight to Mount Lofty—and back, by way of illustration. But the awestruck people who beheld her could never rise higher than they could jump, and Anne again was the heroine of the hour.

Her favourite dream was that she had found the fairies, and

having learned their speech had persuaded them to turn her into a tiny person like themselves, and it followed as a matter of course that they made her their queen. She had a wee little house woven of twigs like a bird's nest, and hung among the crimson and ochre leaves at the top of a young gum. There she would swing, or come down and play hide and seek with the other fairies among the flowers ; or sometimes take long rides on the back of a favourite yellow butterfly, with black spots on his wings, who was always ready to come at her call.

Lately, since she overheard her father saying she had a wonderful voice, she had dreamed of becoming a renowned singer ; but to-night she was a great artist, having recently completed a magnificent painting, the principal feature of which was the white cottage surrounded by a forest ; among the trees, fairies dressed in glistening rose-leaf frocks and starry firefly crowns disported themselves. She had arrived at the point when Queen Victoria, drawn by the fame of the famous picture, was visiting her, when the sleepy eyelids closed, and she slipped for a moment from waking-land to dream-country. But a sound caused her to start wide awake ; her father's voice in the next room.

"Awake, old girl ? " he whispered gently, not wanting to disturb her if she were asleep.

"Yes, father. I kept awake to say good-night."

He kissed the little daughter, whom, though he would not acknowledge it to himself, he loved best of his children, and who responded with a depth of passion rare in one so young.

"Did you bring a book, father ? "

"Yes, here it is, in my pocket."

She put out her hand to touch the parcel. "Is it another fairy tale ? "

"No, it is called *Uncle Tom's Cabin*."

"What a funny name. Who was Uncle Tom ? "

"A black man, a negro slave."

"Oh, poor man ! and a cabin is a little house, isn't it ? "

“ Yes.”

“ And Uncle Tom lived in the cabin, I s’pose. Oh dear! I wish it was to-morrow.”

“ Do you ? ” said her father laughingly. “ I do not, for I am tired and want a good sleep.”

After he had gone, she thought a minute or two about the new book, and then her eyelids shut suddenly, and she was sound asleep.

When Mr. Cassels had finished his simple supper, he leaned back wearily in his chair, gazing thoughtfully into the fire that the chilly spring evening still rendered necessary.

Mrs. Cassels stitched away in silence, for she knew her husband liked to sit thus quiet, until the tired feeling that possessed him had partially passed off.

The room they sat in was sparsely furnished, but everything looked not only neat, but tasteful ; and flies, those pests of the Australian summer, were kept out of the house by means of coarse cotton material tacked across the windows outside, and frames covered with the same at the doors ; while during the hot months, when fires were not required, a piece of perforated zinc at the top of the chimney with a stone on the top kept not only flies, but mosquitoes also from descending. Striped dimity had transformed several boxes into ottomans, and the common wooden sofa was covered with the same. The cane rocker in which Mr. Cassels sat, the only easy chair in the house, was also chintz covered, and though the cushions were stuffed with the snippings of many mendings and makings, they looked as well as if the stuffing was of down. The grey carpet was a square, and round it the bare boards had been painted brown and varnished. A rug made of parti-coloured strips of cloth sewn on canvas lay before the fender. The legs of the large deal table were painted brown, and the top covered with a crimson cloth. Standing in the middle of the table was a large finger-bowl, with quaint lips on two sides, serving as handles. It was filled with buttercups, and the highly polished crystal revealed the

green stalks and leaves standing in the water. There were several shelves of books, and over the mantelpiece hung a portrait in oils of a man in the robe of a Scotch sheriff of many years before. The finger-bowl and portrait were among the few relics that Mrs. Cassels had managed to bring with her from England, for they were reminders of her childhood. The man in robes was her great-grandfather and the finger-bowl one of a set that had belonged to her grandmother.

Her own attire bore the same stamp of slender means and refinement—a plain cotton dress with white linen collar and cuffs—the collar fastened by a fine amethyst in a thin gold setting. The brooch had belonged to her in her girlhood, and was the only article of jewellery of any value that Mrs. Cassels kept when the break up of their fortunes came, and her children never saw her without it in the evening.

Mr. Cassels was a tall, good-looking man with straight features and hair already turning grey, though he was but thirty-six years of age. Heavy shadows lay under the dark blue eyes, and the sensitive mouth was surrounded with lines that disappointment and worry had wrought.

Presently he looked up. "I called in on the way home, Emily, and paid Dr. Byer's account. That is the last of them, so now we are out of debt. Is it not good to feel free once more?"

She drew a deep breath, "Yes, indeed; only those who have had to pass through it know."

"I think the worst is over and that now we shall be able to make a fresh start. Gollan & Co. are building up a splendid business—wholesale as well as retail—and to-day Mr. Gollan told me they would give me another pound a week at the beginning of next month. Who knows, but I might work myself into a partnership? Then, dear, there should be no more drudgery for you, and we might send Anne to England to have her voice trained. Perhaps, too, Aunt Anne will yet come round."

Mrs. Cassels sighed. She was not so optimistic as her

husband. "I am afraid your Aunt Anne will never forgive your thwarting her project of a marriage of her own arranging for you."

"Never is a long time. She has a bitter temper, poor old soul, but I was her favourite nephew, and I think some day she will give in. Cannot you put away your sewing, Emily? It must strain your eyes to be at it night after night."

"Our clothes are many of them getting so old that it necessitates a good deal of patching and darning. However, this is the last I will do to-night. Did you get very tired to-day, Andrew?"

"Not so very badly. Of course Saturday's extra two hours is always a strain, but closing at eight is nothing to what most of the houses expect; they keep open until ten, eleven—some even until midnight, and then every other night in the week the closing hour is eight instead of six, as at our house."

"Why people keep to those long hours," his wife answered, "I can never understand. All the shopping in the world might be done during daylight, and people buying drapery by lamplight can neither see colours nor textures properly. Then lighting must cost shopkeepers something considerable, and both they and their assistants are worn out by such long hours in a close stuffy atmosphere. Good honest work cannot be obtained from an overtired body, while minds also suffer, for it is impossible for people to either read or think after such excessive toil and confinement."

"That is all quite true, Emily, but people like shopping in the evening, at least a certain class does, and it seems impossible to obtain an alteration. We may talk, but talking won't mend it, if we talk for ever."

She paused in her work. "Yes, but words are sometimes the seeds of the plant, whose roots shall one day burst up the walls that custom and prejudice have built."

"True, O wise one," and he smiled appreciatively at her earnest face.

"I frequently used to turn it over my mind in London, and now I often think what a chance this new land has of laying the foundation for a civilization free from the abuses under which older countries groan."

"If I had only been allowed to study for a profession as I wished, and as my poor father intended, I might have had better health, and perhaps could have done something to help carry out your theories."

"Never mind, dear, God's work can be done no matter where our sphere of action. As Carlyle, that new writer, says, 'Do the duty which lies nearest to thee. Here or nowhere is thy America.'"

He did not answer.

Presently she folded up her work, and soon after the whole household slept.

CHAPTER III

THE QUEEN'S HEAD

ON Sunday, when the bells began ringing, Hugh and Anne wended their way to church, both feeling very smart in their Sunday attire; for Hugh had a new suit his mother had made for him out of an old one discarded by his father, and Anne wore the dark blue merino dress and brown felt hat that had been carefully kept for best during two winters.

The air was fresh and sweet. Rain had fallen during the night, and every green thing glistened in the golden sunshine, millions of raindrops flashing rainbow hues.

They walked up the terrace and through Palmer Place. Turnstiles gave ingress and egress to the square, and Hugh ran forward at each one, and jumping on an arm, made Anne push it round. At each end of the narrow lane which divided Bishop's Court from the church there were more turnstiles, so here too Hugh had a ride, though rather a hasty one, as several groups of people were approaching.

"I hope there won't be a long sermon," said he. "Mother is going to bake the dinner in the Dutch oven, and there will be baked potatoes and cabbage," and he smacked his lips.

They were at the porch now, so Anne merely nodded. The thought of baked potatoes and cabbage was grateful to her also, but her conscience rather reproached her for thinking of such mundane matters when entering church.

At the further end of the pew into which the children

passed sat a tall handsome elderly woman, with very dark eyes and eyebrows, and a quantity of white hair. She was particularly well dressed, and beside her was Laurence Leigh, her fair-haired, blue-eyed grandson, with features strikingly like her own. He was about two years older than Hugh, but looked more, as he was built on a larger scale.

He and Hugh grinned recognition, but Mrs. Johnstone did not raise her eyes from the prayer-book she held in her hand. The brother and sister had barely taken their seats when the congregation rose as the Bishop and another clergyman, a stranger, walked in and took their places.

While the Bishop read the lessons Anne looked disapprovingly at the big sleeves and fine ruffles around his sinewy, brown hands; her sense of fitness jarred, and her father's Puritan leanings also influencing her unconsciously.

The strange clergyman preached and Anne tried to listen, but Hugh, after surveying the congregation, and counting all the windows visible to him, and then the panes of glass in each, began to fidget in his seat.

Then Mrs. Johnstone looked round and silently passed some peppermints. He caught her eye and subsided with mixed feelings, partly pleased with the satisfaction of his gastronomic taste, partly indignant that he should be treated as a small child, when he knew himself as far past the period of youth.

Though Anne was apparently absorbed in the sermon, with eyes fixed on the preacher, yet she was quite aware of what was taking place, and considered that a peppermint or two might with advantage have been sent on to where she sat in the corner near the aisle.

The congregation streamed out, and Hugh walked decorously through the turnstiles into the square.

"Let's go over to that wattle tree and see if there is any gum," he said. "They left the path and walked in the direction indicated, and each had soon obtained a lump of the coveted luxury.

"I wonder," remarked Anne, chewing thoughtfully, "which is the true Church."

"Eh?" said Hugh, the prospective joy of dinner engrossing his mind.

Anne repeated her words.

"Oh! I dunno', I should think they're all true."

"But the preacher spoke of the true Church, and said that heresy was a sin, and the dissent people all wrong; so I suppose the dissent people do heresy. Father is a congregationist, I shall ask him, he will know. Are congregationists dissent people I wonder?"

"I did hear him saying something about something that sounded like herrings, but I didn't hear him say whether it was right or wrong. Did you see the way he had that long piece of hair brushed across his bald top, and how, every now and then, he clawed at his head, and almost made the long piece stand up?"

"Yes, and I saw the way you were wriggling; it's wicked not to attend," said Anne primly.

"I did attend to the old fellow's top-knot," laughed Hugh, "and I got some peppermints and you didn't."

Anne still felt sore about the inequalities of fate in the way of peppermints. She very properly thought that virtue should be rewarded, and not vice; so she returned to the question of the true Church, and remarked in an acid tone—

"You're always thinking about eating, instead of more 'portant things. You won't find out which is the true Church, and at the Judgment day you'll be punished."

"Oh, no I won't," returned Hugh airily; "you can find out and let me know, and then just before I die, I'll whip into it and be all right."

Anne considered this point of view; then she said, "But you might die before I find out."

"Oh! I guess not. I wonder if Laurie Leigh is anywhere about. I want to ask him if he's going to play cricket to-morrow. Anyhow I'll run on, I can go faster than you, and if I don't hurry he might be gone," and Hugh raced

off, unheeding Anne's reminder that he ought not to make cricket arrangements on Sunday.

"Mother will be vexed," she said to herself, as he disappeared. "She doesn't like him to be so much with a public-house boy, and she says no woman can be nice who serves drink to drunken men, and hears their bad words, like Mrs. Johnstone does, though she does wear such a beautiful silk dress and velvet bonnet."

She started to follow but, catching sight of a patch of sky-blue flowers of wild flax, and two or three yellow soldier buttons, went aside to gather them. Then there were some little pink blossoms of wild convolvulus twining round a bush, and her steps were next directed thitherwards.

The soft breeze blew towards her, and her footfalls did not sound on the thick grass, so that a little grey bird, with a snowy white breast and black band across it, was taken unawares and almost flew up into her face, as she stooped towards the bush. The bird fluttered a few paces, and lay on the grass with wings outspread ; Anne thought it was wounded and ran to catch it, but when she got close it fluttered further and again she ran. This performance was repeated half a dozen times, until at last to her surprise it flew quite naturally up into the air, and perched on the post and rail fence that enclosed the square.

Anne was of an exceedingly persistent nature, and she went back to get the little pink flowers to put with her blue and yellow ones, thinking she would try and paint them. Then when she stooped again towards the bush she saw what had caused the little bird's eccentric actions, for there was a tiny nest where the convolvulus twined, and in it four white eggs, with red dots on them. A distressed chirping showed that the little mother had followed her back, and was again fluttering her wings on the ground.

"You sweet darling," whispered Anne admiringly, and nodding her head at the bird, "you needn't think I would hurt them."

So she gave one more peep, and then adding the pink

blossoms to her bouquet, went softly away, glad that Hugh was not with her; for though she knew he would not have taken the nest himself, she did not feel sure as to his discretion in the way of showing other boys.

The thought struck her that she had been rather long, and that her mother would be displeased if dinner was kept waiting. "I will run down the street, it is a shorter way than the terrace," she thought.

But when she came opposite the narrow cross lane which led to the terrace she paused and hesitated, for at the corner by the *Queen's Head* there was a man staggering about, and Anne had an absolute terror of drunken men. She was just starting to go another way when Laurie came round the corner. Catching sight of her, and taking in the situation, he ran across the road.

"You need not be frightened, I will go with you past him," and catching hold of her hand he led her along.

He walked beside her after they had passed the intoxicated man, who was leaning against the wall of the public-house, mumbling and muttering to himself.

"Hugh ought to have waited for you," said Laurie.

"He thought I was going the terrace way. Mother always tells me never to come by the public-house, but I was late because I stayed behind to pick some flowers."

"Oh! there is no harm in those fellows, they only get a bit merry. Grandmother won't give them drink if they are too bad."

"Don't you hate to live at a public-house?" inquired Anne.

He laughed. "Oh no, I don't mind; you see, I've always been used to it."

They were on the terrace now, and he bade her "Good-morning" and turned back.

Hugh was waiting at the gate. "Mother is in a wax," he informed her, "you ought to have come on instead of dawdling behind."

Laurie walked slowly up the narrow lane to his home,

and went in through the backway. The man who had scared Anne had slipped down by the wall and was reposing there full length. A barefooted little girl was coming out of the gate with a jug of frothing beer in her hand ; she was putting her lips to the jug and had drunk some of its contents before she saw Laurie in front of her.

"Don't drink that," he said hastily, "it isn't good for little girls."

"I like it," she said, looking at him from under a tangle of dark curls that fell about her face, and licking the froth from her lips.

"You had better leave off liking it all the same, or you'll be sorry by and by," and he walked on.

His grandmother was crossing the verandah, which ran all along the back of the house, and in front of several rooms at the side ; Laurie followed her, and they entered a small apartment where a round table was set for dinner.

"I told Kesiah to lay dinner for us here ; a lot of rough people have come in to-day, and I thought for once we might have dinner together in peace."

"It's ever so much nicer by ourselves, gran," and he sat down opposite to her. While she carved he looked approvingly at the round table, so clean and fresh, and a bunch of wild flowers in a china vase at his right hand, which he had brought home the day before. The horsehair furniture and cheap coloured hunting and racing pictures on the walls were of the usual public-house type, but everything was scrupulously clean and bright.

"Ale or porter ?" asked Mrs. Johnstone, taking up a corkscrew and one of the bottles beside her.

"I don't think I'll have either, thank you."

"How is that ? Are you not well ?" and she looked anxiously at him.

"Oh yes, you'll be sure of that presently, when I get properly started on my dinner, but I don't care for anything but water to-day."

He got up and helped himself from a carafe on the chiffonier. "I met that little Brown girl coming through the

yard, and she was drinking out of the jug. She looked so dirty and ragged and half starved too."

"No wonder, poor little thing; that wretched woman neglects her children shamefully; she and the man both drink, and there are the O'Connors, and indeed all the families living in that disreputable row are about as bad as they can be. A low drunken lot. I noticed that the poor child's frock would hardly hold together, it was a mass of rags. I think I will run her up a frock out of my old alpaca."

"I told her not to drink the beer, gran."

"Quite right, too. I hate to see her come for it. The wretched women who drink send their children when they wouldn't come themselves so often. There is some talk of a law being made to forbid the serving of children, and though I suppose it is not right for me to say anything to injure the business, yet I can't help wishing they would make a law like that.

"Why don't you tell her you won't let her have it, gran?"

"Where would be the good? The money would only go to the *Red Dragon*. Murphy would serve her fast enough, and never give anything back in the way of old clothes and broken victuals like I do. If the woman will spend her money on beer I might as well have it as any one else. Take a little more chicken, Laurence," and she helped him to some of the nicest pieces.

"The asparagus is delicious," said Laurie, as she replaced the vegetable covers.

"I knew you would be pleased, so I bought it, though it is pretty dear."

"You were good, gran, to think of me."

"When do I ever think of much else, dear lad?" and she looked at him with a tender light shining in her eyes, which were apt to look hard when they rested elsewhere.

A young girl came when the bell was rung, and took out the dishes, bringing afterwards jelly and pudding and fruit.

"I will get some wine for you, Laurence, if you would like it, as you didn't have any ale."

"No thank you, gran. I am a good mind to turn tee-totaller altogether."

"Why?" said she smiling, "are you afraid of taking too much?"

"Oh, I don't know why exactly. That old Andy lying down outside and Brown's girl drinking out of the jug, made me feel as if it would be better to leave the stuff alone."

A cloud came over Mrs. Johnstone's face. "Is Andy outside? I must go and get him in when I have finished dinner. It looks so bad to have drunken men going outside like that on Sunday."

She helped herself to jelly. "That notion about not drinking anything because some people make beasts of themselves is absurd. Why, St. Paul told Timothy to take a little wine, and our Saviour turned water into wine."

Perhaps Paul meant it as a medicine, not a beverage, gran, and in those days there wasn't anything like the drunkenness there is now; at least that is what one of our masters said when we read Timothy for our morning lesson; and he said that if our Saviour had lived in these days, He would have more likely turned beer and wine into water, than water into wine, and that no one could imagine His going into a modern public-house bar for a drink."

"He must be one of those narrow canting teetotallers. I wonder Mr. Young employs him. No doubt he had to leave off drink altogether, because he couldn't stop when he had enough. Most of them are people of that sort. I have a contempt for men who haven't more self-control."

"But people can't help being born like that, gran."

"No, I suppose not, but I hope you won't be one of that sort."

A cracked nasal voice outside arose, singing in quavering tones, "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves."

"Bother that old Andy, he is a perfect nuisance. You stay here, Laurence," and Mrs. Johnstone arose hastily

from the table with a flushed face and annoyed look, which boded ill for the culprit. Laurie heard her stern tones commanding him to go and lie down in his room if he could not stand upright like a man, and to remember it was Sunday, and not the day to sing songs.

Through the open door Laurie watched her pick up from the ground a rimless felt hat and put it on the head of the thin wizened old man, who staggered along beside her to the detached room, named in ghastly fashion "the dead house," which was allotted to drunks. With some difficulty she got him inside, and persuaded him to lie down on the straw mattress that, together with a battered old bedstead, was the sole furniture.

As she closed the door there was a sound of loud voices and scuffling elsewhere, and she hurried in the direction from which it came. There were oaths and curses, and mingling with them Laurie could hear his grandmother's voice. Presently the storm seemed to subside, and the boy took up a book and was deep in it when Mrs. Johnstone returned.

"That Mark gets more and more foolish. I told him not to give those bushmen much while I was away at church; but lately he seems to have no sense, and lets them have just what they want. I could see that they had been drinking directly I came back. It's always the way, I never can have a meal in peace. Pass the oranges, dear; I suppose I shall have to go back in a minute."

He insisted on peeling one for her, and while she was eating it, cracked some walnuts and arranged them on a little plate with salt beside, to dip them in, as he knew she liked.

"What was the row about?" he asked.

"I locked the bar, and brought the key away in my pocket before dinner. Two of the men in the bar parlour, who had been lying down asleep, woke up, and would not believe Mark, when he said he could not give them any whisky till I came. Filthy wretches! A person ought to make money to pay for having to listen to their language."

“Why don’t you shut up the house on Sunday, gran? Like they do at *The Bush* in town?”

“They’ve made their money and can afford it. I can’t yet, at all events. If I did half the customers would leave. There is a talk of making a law to close all public-houses on Sunday, and I for one would be glad of it. Publicans want a day of rest just the same as other folks; but if I did it now all the trade would go to the *Red Dragon*.”

She sighed as she dipped her walnuts into the salt, and drank the last of her port.

“Perhaps,” said she, looking down at the cut wineglass and twirling it in her fingers, “we may be able to get out of the public-house in a few years. I have taken shares in Mitchell’s new brewery, and if it turns out a success, as it seems bound to do, and this business keeps up, so that I can get a good round sum for it, we may have free Sundays yet. Though, goodness knows, I think I should feel dull, living private. When a body’s grandfather and father and husband have all been innkeepers—as they call the country ones in England—it comes to be second nature. Only for you, Laurie, I’d keep at it till I die, though I do hate drunks and swearing, and it seems as if you can’t keep a public-house without it, do what you may. But if you’re bent on being a doctor like your father, it won’t do for you to have your gran in the beer trade, at least retail,” and she smiled at him.

“Why have people such a down on publicans, gran, and not on brewers?”

“Oh, I don’t know. The women about hate me because their husbands like to sit in a clean warm room in the winter evenings, and drink their beer there, instead of the wretched holes half of them have. Then people don’t like to see drunks about, and I can’t blame them, for I hate it myself. Let us get into a brewery though, and there’ll be no more looking down on us. Make your money and set up a fine house, and subscribe to all that’s going on, and you can go anywhere. Look at the Bingham, I saw their names in the paper in the list who went to the

last Government House ball. He began by keeping a low grog shanty in the bush, the like of which I wouldn't be seen near ; but old Bingham is worth £100,000 now and the grog shop is forgotten. People only talk of his brewery and his sheep stations, that is, most of them."

She folded her serviette and stood up. "Are you going for a ride, dear? No, reading again. I never saw such a boy for a book." She tapped him lightly on the head as she passed out and he again took up *David Copperfield*.

About half an hour went by, during which he was oblivious to all outside sights and sounds, held fast by the enchanter's magic, and scarcely noticed presently the presence and heavy footfalls of a stout woman who was moving nimbly in and out of the room, clearing away the dishes, and placing several articles in the chiffonier.

"You be main fond o' yer books, Laurie. It 'stounds me 'ow yer granma lets yer read trashy novels o' Sunday. It 'ud become yer better to be a readin' o' yer Bible."

He looked up, smiling absently at her ; then his eyes went down to the page again.

"Nice job I 'ad wi' those wretches o' men this mornin'. That Mark be gettin' no use, 'e be 'arf his time drinking. Pity you'm be goin' to be a man, Laurie, most o' 'em hain't no use ; they be like apples nipped wi' frost, no more'n one in a bushel any good, an that unlike as not wi' a worm in it."

Laurie knew it was of no use trying to read while Keziah was in a talkative humour, so he turned down a page and laid the book on his knee.

"I've often told you, you ought to have married Mark, and then you could have kept him from drinking," but you wouldn't," and he looked at her with mischief twinkling in his eyes, for he knew that the subject of marriage was perennially interesting to the stout serving woman.

"Cos wy? Cos the dunder 'ead never so much as axed me. E'd a good chance, an 'oudn't tak' it ; ef it 'ad a bin any good I'd a haxed 'e ; but I see it warn't, and now if 'is pockets was filled with gold, I oodn't 'ave 'e ; that is

unless 'e give it over to I afore the sirennumy, so that I could 'old tight ter it wen 'e be gone, as gone 'e will be pratty soon, unless 'e pulls in, an ben's 'is helber hout less frequent."

"Why, Kesiah!" exclaimed Laurie aghast, "you don't think Mark is going to die?"

"Durn't I?" said she, looking back and shaking her head, as she carried out the tray. She returned in a minute or two wiping the perspiration off her face with her apron.

"It be main 'ot," she said, sitting down, "an' I've bin 'ard at it all the marnin'; that Meram is a lazy 'ussy, an t'other not much better. Meram is the most uselesst, carelesst gal as lever was, and leaves heverything 'er can; so 'er can jus' finins up the kitchen, while I sits at me hease for a blink. Yes, as I was sayin', Mark is gittin' a drunken sot, an 'orrible man arter all them years. I 'ouldn't a believed on it, ef I 'adn't a seed it wi' me hown eyes; an' a decenter man yer couldn't a set eyes on wen 'e fust came."

"I know he drinks sometimes, but I didn't think as bad as that."

"It sometimes a comes ter me," said Keziah, lowering her voice and looking round as if afraid she might be overheard. "I sometimes," she repeated, "thinks as 'ow ther hain't no blessin' in this here drink trade. Most of the publicans takes to drink thei'sel's, or their wives, or their chillen, or their servans, or the money goes some-way or t'other. There's them o' our preachers as is bitter against drink, and 'sides the Primitives, a lot o' the Baptizes 'll' ave nothing to do wi' it; an' sometimes wen I 'ears 'em, I've a mind, though I bin all them years wi' yer granma, ter up stick an' away."

"You must not do that, Keziah. We couldn't get on without you, and I don't believe you would like to go to strangers."

"I doesn't believe I 'ould, lad; but lor', a body muss look efter 'er hown soul, an I b'lieve our ministers is ter the right o' it, in prachin' about drink. Wot ignrant folks wants is

someun to splain things 'ow they ought ter live every day, not prachin' a passel o' fallals as some on 'em does, 'bout bobbin' round afore the halter, an' lightin' lamps, and men walkin' bout in wimmen's gowns, like they does in yer granma's church. They wants summat as mak's common sense. Ef I left yer granma, I don't know 'ow 'er 'ud do ; an though 'er be a bit flyjum at toimes 'er bain't a bad sort."

Laurie knew that "flyjum" with Keziah meant overbearing, but he never could find out whether she had coined the adjective herself, or had annexed it from some one else.

"Yer granma won't get no good on 'er money, yer mark my words. I oodent think 'er 'ud take ter drink 'erself, at 'er age," she continued reflectively, "though I've known older 'an 'er. P'raps 'twill be you, Laurie, maybe you'll bring disgrace on 'er some'ow ; but don't yer do it, Laurie, noow, she's bin a good granma ter yer."

Laurie rather resented Keziah's cheerful prognostications and told her so.

"Well, I knawed yer pa, an I knawed yer ma ; an' a fine upstandin' fellow 'e wor ; an a sweet young thing 'er wor, though not by no means 'is ekal, seein' 'ow could 'er be, 'im a doctor an 'er yer granma's darter. An wot I tell yer is for yer good, an wot I seys is, don't never bring disgrace on yer granma," and she shook her head at him warningly.

He did not answer, and after getting up and vigorously dusting the legs of the chairs, and declaiming against that "'ussy" Meram's neglect (the unfortunate girl's name was Mary Anne but Keziah had abbreviated it and placed the accent on the second syllable), she sat down again, and started afresh—

"It was a dreffel thing yer pa dyin' of fever aboard ship an' 'er a week arter yer come inter the world, six months arter us landed. The ole doctor must a repented 'isself a sendin' 'is only son away, wen word went back 'e wor dead. 'E didn't live long arter, poor ole genelum."

"And you lived with my grandfather, didn't you? And when my father was coming out, you asked him to let you come with him?"

Laurie had heard all these details over and over again, but neither he nor Keziah were ever tired of the subject; and he knew exactly where she waited for him to ask questions.

"A course I did. I'd 'eer tell as it was a good place fer single gals. Wen Master John ood marry Lily Johnstone there wer a rumpus, I can tell yer. An e'd only just got 'is certificat, as doctors 'ave ter git; an' the ole doctor said as 'ow 'e didn't want 'is darter socializing with a hinkeeper's darter; so Master John 'ad best pack up sticks and start fer 'Stralia. 'E'd got 'is eddication an 'ud 'ave 'is passage paid, and a few puns in 'and that was all 'e ood do fer 'im. So then yer granma sed 'er ood go too, fer Lily was all the kin 'er 'ad. An' a good thing 'er come, or goodness knows wot 'ood a come ter yer, Laurie. 'Er started with this 'ere pub, arter yer ma died; an' very well 'er done too; only as I says I don't knaw as theer's a blessin' in it.

"Yer pa wer allus the nicest feller with a joke fer hevryun, so I comes wi' them too. An wen yer pa wer dyin' he axed me fer ter stay with yer poor ma; an so I did as long as 'er wanted me, poor soul. 'Er never got over 'is death, fer 'er warn't like yer granma, wi' plenty o' spirrit, but a soft young thing, though 'er warn't a lady, poor soul," and Keziah wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"An' the comin' to this 'ere wild 'Stralia wur hawful. Wen some of them sailors 'ad got hout with their bare legs in the watter, an' pulled the boat till 'er stuck in the sand, and me a sittin' an' lookin' round fer a place ter git hout on ter dry lan,' a big 'ulkin' feller says ter I wi' a imperdent grin on 'im, 'Git on me back, me gal, an put yer harms roun' me neck, an 'ave a ride,' I looks round fer help, an' if yer b'lieve me ther was yer granma a ridin' on a bare-legged man's back in the watter. But I draws me 'ed hup majestic, an' dares the 'ulkin' feller to come a nigh me.

"'Hall right, ole gal,' 'e says. 'Yer can come back ter

the ship wi' us ; us wants a noo cook ; or yer can step hover the side of the boat yersel', if yer don't like ter ride pick-aback.' Well, I looks hover at the waves a dashin' hup, and I didn't see 'ow I could tak' hoff me shoes, not ter mention stockin's an' garters, an' go a 'oldin' hup me petticoats afore them men, so I was forced to go, an me wite stockin's showin' disgraceful, an them himperdent men a laughin'."

Laurie laughed too. " And you had to walk all the way to Adelaide ? "

" Hivery step, hover sand an' bushes, an' reeds all dried hup, an' so 'ot they burned yer feet, an yer could almost hear yerself a frizzling. Hall but yer ma ; they pulled 'er up in a bit of a go-cart ; an' they 'ad ter 'awl all the luggage hup on it. An' all the 'ouse we could get was a bit of a 'ut with tworooms, an' no winders nor doors. And the savvingses next marnin'. Oh lor, I made fer sure I should a died wen 'earin a soun' like a lot o' turkeys screechin' an' gobblin' I pulled hup the tablecloth we 'ad made a door hof, an' ther wer a pack o' black savvingses, hall hover grease shinin' on 'em, an' not so much as a pair o' trousers atween the lot, nor a rag on 'em except a bit o' stuff around their waistesses. I drops the curting an' call ter yer granma ter come hout an' see wot we was hall a comin' to. ' This 'ere 'Stralian sun,' I seys, ' ull burn us hall black, like them indecent savvingses, in no time, an' then I s'pose we shall tak ter leavin' hoff our cloes an' greasin' oursel's hinstead.' "

" Well," said Laurie, recovering from his mirth, " we haven't done that yet."

" Ah, but yer never knaws wot yer might a come ter yet ; yer an yer chillen," answered Keziah darkly, and shaking her head.

" Well, I must be a goin'," and she got up. " Sundays is like any hother days at a pub. Allers the work flyin' ahead o' yer, an yer a chasin' of it, but never ketchin' of it hup. Thet is fer wimmen ; Mark, the lazy lump 'e is, doesn't kill 'isself with work, Sunday or no Sunday. There 'e is a layin' down in 'is room now. Them men 'ave the best

of it, hevry way yer can mention, the wratches," she said viciously as she bustled away to the kitchen.

Laurie was left undisturbed all the rest of the afternoon, but it was a good while before he could settle down to read ; for his thoughts ran on what Keziah had told him about Mark. At last he once more became lost in his book until he heard the tea-bell ring, and he was startled to find how late it was. A number of men were already sitting down, all smelling of drink, and two or three having a difficulty to make food and mouth come to an agreement.

Some of the men were shearers who had just come down country to get rid of the cheques they had won by hardest toil and living ; there was a shopman and a clerk out for a holiday, and there were several working-men from the neighbourhood. Most of them knew what excellent meals were provided at the *Queen's Head*, for Mrs. Johnstone was renowned for her housekeeping, and prided herself upon it, also her charges were moderate. For these reasons there were generally full tables on Sundays, and the cheque smashers knew that when they had spent their last penny they would not be immediately turned out of doors, as was done at the *Red Dragon*, but allowed to remain for a day or two until they had partially recovered ; and given food on condition—often a poor and remote one—of future repayment ; though they were never permitted to run up scores for drink.

There was loud talking, some of the men being in the aggressive stage ; and Laurie finished his tea as soon as possible, glad to get away from the noise and the smell of the numerous human brandy casks. As he was leaving the room, a rough-looking man at the end of the table got up also.

"Come and 'ave a drink, sonny," he said in a semi-tipsy voice and blocking the way.

"No thank you," answered Laurie shortly.

"Yes, yes, come and 'ave a drink," reiterated the man.

Laurie again declined and tried to pass.

"Yer grannie won't thank yer if yer try to keep money

out of 'er pocket. We're all trying to fill it for 'er, that's wot most of us work for, to keep 'er flush of money."

Laurie's colour rose, and he determinedly pushed by and went into the bar.

His grandmother was sitting down, looking tired and drinking tea from the cup she held in her hand, while on a shelf near her elbow was a little plate of bread and butter.

"I'm just trying to get something while they are at tea," she said. "There have been such a lot in, and I can't leave because Keziah wants to go to church, and Mark is not well."

"No chance at all of your getting out to-night then, gran?"

"No, you must go to church by yourself. Here is a two-shilling piece for the collection, one for you and one for me."

"You might let me serve for once, gran, and give you a rest."

"No, I've never let you do that yet, and I won't begin unless I'm obliged. It is no place for a boy," and she glanced towards a bench on which a man was lying asleep who had made her soul sicken with his foul and brutal language.

Most of the men had come from the dining-room; some of them standing about the verandah and passage, smoking; those who expectorated making indiscriminate use of the oilcloth in the passage, the wall, or the slate floor of the verandah. The man who had asked Laurie to have a drink was attempting a step dance, having first pulled off his boots to prevent Mrs. Johnstone from hearing him.

"I say, sonny, ain't yer coming for that drink?" he called out; but Laurie passed on, except for his contracted brow not seeming to hear, got his hat and went out of the gate.

CHAPTER IV

MARK'S STORY

HE walked to the top of Montefiore Hill, where there was a rough wooden seat under a group of gums, and sat down to wait until it was church time—half an hour yet. His eyes, their usual happy light clouded, rested on the silver line of the sea that girded the plain to the west. All his life he had been surrounded with just such scenes as he had witnessed to-day; but as children mostly do, in relation to their usual environment, had taken them as a matter of course, without question of their right or wrong.

Somehow little Anne Cassels' question as to whether he did not hate to live at a public-house, had raised an unwonted train of thought; and besides his anger had been kindled against the man who had spoken of the way his grandmother's money was chiefly made. As he thought of it now his hands involuntarily clenched and tears of mortification filled his eyes, for he could not refute the statement even to himself.

"Disgusting wretches," he said aloud, as he had often heard his grandmother term some of the customers; but still true it was, that the stupid sodden creatures did work to fill her pockets, and the more stupid, sodden and disgusting they became the more *she* prospered. Some of the business was honest, honourable work, for Mrs. Johnstone gave good value to her boarders and lodgers; but the fact remained, the naked truth looked him in the eyes, that it was not from that source her chief revenue was derived; it was from the men who came to enjoy themselves by getting drunk, by having a good old spree, by knocking down their cheques.

"I hate the public-house," he spoke aloud again passionately. Then there came to his mind what Keziah had told him about Mark. Could it be possible that she was right, and that Mark, poor old Mark, might die?

The thought of death struck cold upon his young heart, and the physical repulsion with which healthy, vigorous youth commonly greets that great mystery, chilled him and made him shiver.

When a tiny child Mark had been his playfellow, and he could remember riding on his broad shoulders, and later on, being taught by him how to manage his pony. He had a vague idea that the silent man who for many years had acted as barman and ostler to Mrs. Johnstone, had something in his past life about which he did not care to speak. Only a very vague idea, and Laurie scarcely knew how it had found lodgment in his brain. A sudden stop in the middle of a story, a hesitation about names, a gloom that sometimes overspread the narrator, and silenced him at the most interesting part of a story.

He used to tell Laurie of his early life in the English fishing village where he had been born; of the long line of boats gliding outward, their sails white with youth or yellow with age, gleaming in the morning light; of the sweet briny air that played over the pale blue sea; of the voices calling to each other in glad companionship.

Then he would talk of the home coming, the wealth of finny creatures filling the boats; the mothers and wives and sisters on the beach, their faces bathed in the rosy beams of the setting sun. He would tell of the cliffs he used to climb after sea-birds' nests, of the delight of swimming in clear rocky pools or breasting the long lines of foaming waves.

Sometimes there were stories lacking the infinite grace and freshness of innocent youth. Smuggling tales, smacking not only of bold adventure but of crime. Men striving together in hot blood. Man rending life from his fellow-man; prison cells where lonely captives expiated in shame and remorse the unpremeditated act of a moment. There

were tales too of travel in many lands, where Mark had gone as a sailor, of his tiring of a wandering life and drifting towards the haven of the *Queen's Head*, where he had remained for ten years.

He was far above the average man of his class, had read considerably and spoke well. More than six feet in height, strong and robust, Laurie had always looked up to him as his ideal of health and strength. Now that his attention was aroused, he remembered that there had been a gradual change, that the tanned face had become bloated, the eyes bloodshot, the hand shaky. Could it be? Could it be that poor Mark was going to die? and again Laurie shivered.

The bells of Christchurch were ringing when he mechanically got up from his seat. He had the pew all to himself to-night. The Bishop preached a short practical sermon on the passage, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It chimed in with Laurie's shadowy thoughts as to the undesirableness of obtaining money in doubtful ways, and the probability of its bringing bitter fruits; and the closing hymn—

Days and moments quickly flying
Blend the living with the dead—

seemed to echo them.

As Laurie came through the lane turnstile he lifted his eyes to the myriad other eyes which looked down upon him, so pure and peaceful they shone, so shadowy the distant hills, so sweet the pungent flower odours from the Bishop's garden. The boy felt disinclined to face the stale smell of drink, and the sight of swine in human form, so wandered down the terrace towards the Cassels', half hoping that Hugh might be visible outside. But no one was about, only a light shone below the bottom of a blind that had not been quite pulled down, and there was an occasional murmur of voices.

He pictured the family all gathered round the fire, listening to Mr. Cassels' reading, for Hugh had mentioned how

his father read aloud to them in the evenings. For the first time in his life something like envy of another's good sprang up in his heart ; and he turned away wishing his lot had been cast differently, that he had brothers and sisters and a quiet peaceful home.

A chill wind began to blow, so he buttoned his coat and walked quickly back. He could see the red light of a black's fire, where they were camped near the Torrens, and hear the sound of their voices borne to him on the wind, and stopped to listen a minute. Then he was just going to turn up the narrow lane that led to the *Queen's Head* when he caught sight of a man leaning over the Parklands' fence on the opposite side of the terrace. The outline seemed familiar, and he crossed the road to find his conjecture correct, and that it was Mark standing there. The man had risen, and he could see his face as he turned round when Laurie touched his arm.

"Aren't you well, Mark ? "

"No, I'm not, but that's nothing new. Never mind me, Laurie, you go home."

But Laurie did not move. "What's the matter, Mark ? If you are ill, why don't you go to the doctor ? "

"There's no doctor who could cure my illness, boy. What I want is a will of my own, and no doctor could give me that."

He turned his head again, and stared moodily in front of him. The smell of drink exhaled from his clothes and breath, and his face looked ghastly pale in the moonlight. Laurie did not know what else to say and did not like to leave him by himself, so he jumped on to one of the posts and sat there. Two or three minutes passed and then Mark stirred.

"What, still there ? " he said, looking round, "well, if you won't go in, come for a walk. I thought a stroll in the fresh air would do me good, but it seemed too much trouble when I got here."

They walked in silence the same way that Laurie had gone earlier in the evening, and when they reached the

seat both sat down. Laurie beat his feet on the ground, and hummed and whistled softly, but the man sat gloomily still, his arms loosely folded, his eyes fixed on the lights across the river, the twinkling oil lamps of the town which in a few years was to become a city.

"Don't you ever drink," he said, suddenly turning his head, and looking fixedly at the boy.

"Do you mean you want me to be a teetotaller?"

"I wasn't thinking of your taking the pledge; but better that than get so that you can't do without the cursed stuff."

"Why, can't you?"

He laughed hoarsely. "Something like that; at least I've begun to think so lately."

"But if it makes you ill, why don't you leave it off?"

"More easy to say than do, boy."

"But what is there in it; if you don't want to take it, why do you?" said Laurie wonderingly.

"That is the point, what is in it?" he returned mockingly. Then with a swift change of look and voice, "It's a fatal fascination, that's what it is. There's nothing like it in the world. It won't let you alone; it whispers to you day and night; it comes round you in glasses, bottles, buckets, oceans of it and calls, 'Drink me, drink me, drink me,' and your throat burns and burns, and you can think of nothing else, see nothing else; and at last you *do* drink, till you forget. But then—when you awake—then horrible things come round you, and you wish you were dead, dead, and in a place where no drink follows you day and night, calling, calling, and won't let you rest."

His voice sank low, and he looked down muttering thickly and indistinctly. Laurie was frightened, for he had heard and seen enough of the effects of drink on the habitués of the *Queen's Head* to know that the man was not far from an attack of delirium tremens, if it were not already on him.

"Come home, Mark," he entreated, taking his hand, "and I will get the doctor for you."

"The doctor is no use. I am a good mind to kill myself

and end it all; but then, as Shakespeare says, 'What dreams!'"

Laurie shrank back, and for a moment thought it would be better to leave; then tried once more—

"Do come, Mark, and I will sit with you, and you can tell me about the place you used to live in, and the jolly times you had in France and Holland."

"No, stay here, and I'll tell you a story now," he answered with sudden energy in his voice; "a new one that you haven't heard before. Do you remember what I told you of that fellow who shot one of the coast-guards? He knew he did it, because he saw the man drop to his gun, and the others had emptied theirs. Do you remember how they could not prove who did it? Only he and his mates knew; but they stuck to him and never told. He got five years in gaol, but he would have been hung if they had known."

Laurie nodded.

"Well, listen, I was the man."

"The man who shot the coast-guard?" exclaimed Laurie with dilated eyes.

"Aye, the man who shot the coast-guard."

There was silence for a minute, and from the river came the strange sad cry of a curlew.

Then he went on: "When I came out of gaol, my poor old mother was dead, died of a broken heart; and the girl I loved, who might have married me, had married another man. Kith nor kin had I, so I just went away to sea, and roved about until I came here; and a bad day it was for me when I came. But perhaps it would have been all the same, the fellow's face has been always before me, I saw it as he fell. It would have been better if I had told who did it and been hung."

He looked wildly round, and wiped the drops that stood upon his brow.

"Come home," whispered Laurie with pale lips.

"No, not yet; it is a relief to tell some one, even a boy like you. Do you know what made me murder him?"

Brandy, the cursed thing. We were running a cargo of brandy, and had been drinking some too ; and brandy is killing me now. Every night in my dreams he laughs at me and says, ' It won't be long before I have you, you will soon be with me now, the murdered and the murderer together.' "

" No, no," cried Laurie, " you are not a murderer ; it was an accident ; how often have you told me so."

" All the same that was not true, I did mean to shoot him, for I saw him plainly in the moonlight, and aimed straight at his heart. But if I had not drunk anything that night, I would not have done it ; for I never willingly harmed a fly before. When I saw him fall that sobered me ; I could not believe he was dead. A man I had never set eyes on before, who had done me no wrong, killed by this hand," and he held it out before him.

" I got off with five years, and thought to begin afresh ; but always he followed me. I hated the cursed stuff that had worked my ruin, and for many years never touched it. Then I grew tired of wandering, and Mrs. Johnstone had been kind to me once when I was ill and boarded here ; so when she wanted a man to help, I took the place, and for a long time drank little. But, you know what it is in the bar ; the stupid fools who throw their money away are always bothering you to drink, and you don't like to refuse a good customer ; so at last, before I knew where I was, I found myself craving for it. I tried again and again for weeks at a time to do without ; but always it was the same thing, no peace till I took it. As I said before, there is a fatal fascination in the cursed thing ; not only in the taste but in the smell as well."

A rush of pity filled Laurie's heart. He could not tell how much of the story was true, how much imagined, but he saw that the man was suffering intensely, both in mind and body.

" Can't you try and give the drink up, Mark ? " he pleaded, touching the hand that rested on the seat beside him.

"It's no good, Laurie. I've tried over and over again."

"But once more ; try once more," and the boy clasped Mark's arm beseechingly.

The man's eyes rested sadly and despairingly on the young face that reflected the strained miserable expression of his own.

"It's no use, boy ; it's just as if a devil had got hold of me."

With his shaking hand he tried to draw the handkerchief from his pocket, but before he could do so, great tears fell from his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

Then Laurie did what had not happened to him for long, burst into a passion of weeping. The unwonted thoughts that had taken possession of him during the day, joined to the horror and pity excited by Mark's story, and the miserable hopelessness of the narrator, had stirred the very depths of his being, and broken up the reserve and make-believe stoicism which are part of a schoolboy's second nature.

Mark wiped his eyes hastily. "Don't, don't," he whispered huskily. "I am not worth it."

Laurie made a violent effort and stopped. He bit his trembling lips, and clenched his hands, but could not speak. He was angry with himself for crying like a girl, as he thought scornfully ; but his tears did what his entreaties could not.

"See, Laurie, just to please you, I'll try once more. I know it's no good," he murmured, sighing heavily, "but I'll try."

He got up. "We had better go in, your grandmother will wonder where you are."

They walked back in silence, Laurie still shaken by the tempest which had passed over him. At the gate Mark paused.

"It's nearly shutting up time. I'll see if I can get some coffee. Good-night, my boy." He held out his hand and Laurie laid his in it silently.

His grandmother was in the sitting-room, for Keziah had taken her place in the bar.

"Why, Laurie, how late you are. I was getting quite fidgety. Where have you been?"

"I went for a walk with Mark after church."

"You stayed out too late in the cold, and you look quite pale. Come and have some supper now. Where is Mark?"

"He has gone to the kitchen for some coffee, he seems so ill, grandmother."

"No wonder, the stupid fool, he is always drinking. He is getting quite useless too; but I don't like to discharge him, after his being with us so long. Some cheese, Laurence?"

She poured out two cups of coffee, gave him one and took the other herself.

"Couldn't you send him away somewhere, gran; somewhere where he couldn't get any drink?" asked Laurie coaxingly.

"I don't suppose it would be any good, even if he could go. People can always get drink if they have a mind. But I don't believe he would go. I've talked to him until I'm tired."

"Oh, do try, gran." Privately he thought he would use all his endeavours to persuade Mark, but he forbore to say so to Mrs. Johnstone, and he also determined to tell no one what had been revealed to him that night.

She smoothed her hair thoughtfully with her finger. "There are those people at the Summit, who stay here sometimes when they come to town. I might get them to take him for a time; there will be plenty of farm work from now till Christmas, that is, of course, if he would go. I will talk to him about it in the morning. One thing is very certain, that unless he gives up drink he will kill himself in no time. Go to bed now, dear. I hope you have not caught cold, your eyes look so red and watery. If you were a girl, I should think you had been crying?" and she laughed.

He tried to smile back as he kissed her. It was with a relieved heart that he went to his room ; youth is full of hope, and he felt sure that Mark would break the fetters which bound him. He would get up early in the morning and persuade him to fall in with the proposition to go to the Summit.

During the night he was awakened by heavy steps staggering outside his window. He got up, and drawing aside the curtain, looked out. It was Andy reeling hither and thither, hatless and with a bottle in his hand ; and leaning against the verandah post stood Mark, watching Andy's attempts to get the bottle to his mouth.

Two restless unquiet spirits, sinking into the pit which smothers all the higher impulses of our strange complex nature, and leaves naught but the swine's desire to swill and swill.

* * * * *

That same evening the reading of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had commenced at the white cottage. The baby was asleep, Jessie sat on her mother's lap, Anne on a hassock where she could lean her head against her father's knee and look into the fire. Hugh took his place on the rug and sprawled and twisted there, interested indeed with the others, but not absorbed like his elder sister.

Mr. Cassels possessed the exceptional accomplishment of being a really fine reader. He had been the best elocutionist of his school, and, later on, an expert at amateur theatricals. Now he held his hearers spellbound, even little Jessie understanding and giving her tribute of attention, so that she kept wide awake long after her usual bedtime.

While Jessie was being put to bed by her mother Mr. Cassels told his other children of the beginning of slavery in America. How to people of that time it seemed an excellent thing to have servants at their absolute disposal to work in their houses or on their fields ; to do with them just as they liked. But before this could be accomplished they had to set aside one of the fundamental laws of

Christianity—to do unto others as they would be done by—and so in the wake of the broken law inevitable punishment followed. “ ‘Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small,’ ” he quoted.

The miseries of the poor creatures bought and sold and worked like cattle was one terrible fruit ; but still worse was the moral degradation brought about in both owners and slaves, and the racial hatred engendered between them. The North had for some time awakened to the fact that in slavery the country was cherishing a plague spot, destined to work further woe and ruin unless healed ; and earnest men and women were openly advocating its abolition.

Among these latter was Mrs. Beecher Stowe, and one day it occurred to her to attempt the writing of a book which would show to the world the crimes and vileness of slavery. She always maintained that when she sat down to write, she felt as if taken possession of, and that thoughts and words were given to her. The book was a brilliant success, not only in America, but in every civilized country in the world.

“ And will the South make the poor slaves free ? ” asked Anne.

Her eyes were still moist with the tears she had shed, and which every now and then continued to well up. She held her face down beside her father’s knee, wiping her eyes stealthily when she thought Hugh was not looking. He had noticed her crying, but as he had himself several times been compelled by the exigencies of the case to sniff suspiciously, he thought it better to forbear to tease.

“ It must end in their being freed, but how no one can tell. Some think that war between the North and South will be the outcome ; but I sincerely hope not. War is awful enough at any time ; but civil war—people of one country and kindred fighting each other—is a devil’s game.”

Anne’s voice was still tremulous when she bade her father “ Good-night.” He looked earnestly at her, as with eyes cast down she kissed him.

That passionate little heart and busy brain how would they fare in the coming years? If by any chance his health broke down again, what would become of her, and of all of them? But he would not entertain such thoughts; they only unnerved him without doing any good. He would hope for the best, and leave the issue to the God who cares for all His children.

Anne's waking dream that night was of becoming a renowned author. Mrs. Stowe had proved that a woman could deal a terrible blow at slavery; so why should not she, when a woman, do likewise. But her father said he was sure that slavery would soon become a thing of the past, so that by the time her book could be written it would be no longer needed. Stay, what was that he had said in the morning when she told him about seeing the drunken man. He had spoken of another sort of slavery. "Slaves of drink" he called the poor drunkards, and he also said he did not see how they could ever be freed. She would write a book about the slaves of drink, and it should help to set them free. And so from that time her dreams continually ran in the direction of authorship. Anne Cassels was some day to write a book which would astonish the world, and demolish the drink traffic.

CHAPTER V

THE ADELAIDE HILLS

“WHAT a funny name, father, *The World's End*; why, we might tip over,” and Anne looked again at the sign hung outside the little inn, then gaily capered to the corner of the vine-clad, trellised verandah, hung thick with the yet unripe grape clusters, under which her father was sitting in a rustic wooden chair, by the side of an equally rustic table. The landlord, a portly individual with a large white apron spread over the most rotund part of his body, and a wide straw hat tilted back from his brow, brought a waiter on which was a glass of foaming ale and a cup of milk, and set it on the table.

“’Ot, mister; but a cool Christmas for Australia. Last night when I pulled up a blanket over me, it a’most made me think of the old land.”

He took up the shilling Mr. Cassels laid down, and producing some coppers from his pocket, carefully counted out the change, pressing his lips together as he did so.

“If little miss, here, would like some apricots, I’ll get her one or two out of the garden, for ’em are fine this year and plenty on ’em.”

Anne’s beaming face was sufficient answer, without her father’s thanks; so the landlord went inside the house and brought out a small basket, plucked a few large vine leaves to line it, and passing through a gate, presently returned with the luscious goldeny-pink fruit. Then he produced a short black pipe and sat down, leaving them to windward, so that the smoke blew away from the group.

“The coolest Christmas I seen since I left the old land,

and I come out in the *Buffalo* same year as our Queen—God bless her—come to the throne. Yes, I was one of the first lot of Colonials, and was there when Governor Hindmarsh read the proclamation under the old gum tree.”

“A very interesting event, the founding of what may be a great nation in time to come.”

“You may well say so, sir. Just a handful of people we was, and nothing but forests and black savages around us. Bin out long, sir?”

“About twelve years.”

“Ah! Well, mister, folks of these times know nothing of the hardships us first settlers ’ad to go through the fust years. Why, that there little Adelaide town is a’most getting like a city in the old country now; but when we come fust we ’ad to make little bits of places with boughs, and it was hard on the women—scarcely one with a chair or table. Why, just see the fine busses they’ve got on the Port road instead of the yaller spring mail-carts as ’ave done us this many a year. Them carts we thought a lot of at fust when we ’ad to tramp it the whole way, or by good luck get a ride on a dray. Now we’ve got the busses, and there is even talk of a railway being made, the same as they’ve got in the old country. My wife is always casting up at me now about the silver teapot and spoons I made her sell before we come out; for I thought we wouldn’t want nothing but tin plates and pannikans, and neither did we for many a year; but now ’tis different, and the women are getting a lot of gimcrackery round ’em they could well do without. But lor’, it’s no good talking; gimcrackery they want, and gimcrackery they’ll ’ave; so us men, if we want a quiet life, must just give in to ’em, and let them gimcrack themselves till ’em are like to bust with pride when they’ve got better than other women.”

“Quiet here, did you say, sir? Um, yes, it is quiet so far to-day; but if you’d bin along yesterday you’d have seen a tidy goodish bit of business doing. In fact,

I thought I should 'ave 'ad to send for a trooper, the fellows got that obstroperous."

"Yes, doing pretty well, thank 'ee," he said in answer to another inquiry. "Trust me for that," and he winked at the wreaths of smoke curling upwards. "I'd a farm here at fust, a matter of two miles away, and I sweated pretty hard at it, I can tell you, and done none so bad out of that; but I noticed that a lot of the neighbours was sweating as hard as me, but they never seemed no better off for all their sweating, for they spent nigh everything they made at this here pub. So one day I says to meself, 'Jim, old boy, why don't you get the pub yourself, then all you'd 'ave to do would be to sit tight, and let these here fools do all the sweating for you.' And just at that time I'd a real bit of good luck. The City Council decided to 'ave all the gums on the south Parklands cut down. Fools they was cuttin' down all those splendid trees, and leaving the place bare where the people used to go out and sit in the evenings, and the children play under. But it made a good haul for me, for they offered half-a-crown a tree; and I got the contract and all the wood thrown in. It stood me in a cool £1,000, and I bought this here place and let me farm."

"It was a pity to destroy the trees on the Parklands."

"Pity! I should rather think it was. Why, that there Colonel Light laid out the town grand, with squares in the middle and Parklands all round—the lungs of the city' he called them; and the stoopid Council keep cutting down the trees till by and by they'll be as bare as my hand; and then a' course be forced by the dust to start planting of 'em again. But, bless me 'art, it will take years and years to grow 'em again."

He puffed away meditatively. "I bought out the old landlord here, who was killing hissself with drink, and in I come, and pretty well I've done I can tell you. Why, if I was to clear out now I could live independent, and heaps of fellows—my clients I calls them, those who

passed most of their earnings over the counter to me—are stone broke, and lots of 'em dead.”

“Pleasant for them,” said Mr. Cassels drily.

“Um, yes, it is a bit off when you come to think of it ; but lor', if I didn't 'ave the money another man would, so I might just as well.”

Mr. Cassels sipped his ale thoughtfully. “The thing is should not each one of us try to keep his own hands clean, even if others will soil theirs? I am preaching to myself mind as well as to you.” The landlord shrugged his shoulders but did not answer.

“Besides, are you not afraid of going the same way as your predecessor?”

He gave a knowing laugh. “No, no, I'm a bit too cunning for that. Of course it don't do to let folks know, but to tell the truth I did find myself taking a drop too much the fust year or so ; so one day, I says, ‘Jim,’ says I, ‘if you don't put on the brake, you'll be a goner like poor old Billings’—that was the last landlord, you know—so I took me affydavy that so long as I'm in this 'ere pub, I won't touch nothing stronger than tea, and I keep a decanter full of cold tea behind the bar, and when they say to me what will I drink, I says, ‘Brandy, a nobbler,’ and they pass me sixpence over the counter ; so we're both satisfied, and no harm done.”

He took his pipe out of his mouth and slowly knocked out the ashes. “It's a rum thing this here treating if you looks at it. If a feller was to go into a baker's and say to the man behind the counter, ‘Ave a bun or two, old man?’ or at a butcher's, ‘Ave a pound of chops, or some pigs' trotters, old chap?’ it would look queer. By the time he had been to the grocer's and asked him to accept a pound of sugar, and the bootmaker's and insisted on his 'aving a pair of slippers or some bootlaces, they'd say he was off his chump and send for the police. Before I started this cold-tea business I used to try and get out of the treating sometimes, but them chaps would get that offended, and ask me if I felt myself too big to drink with

them, and I began to lose custom. If you keep a pub and want to be poplar and do business, you've just got to let them treat you like a beggar, pitch you a sixpence when they're in a good humour, and throw you a curse when they ain't. Pubs ain't all beer and skittles, not by a long chalk; but you've just got to take the good with the bad, and you notice whoever goes down, they manage to keep up, do pubs, year in and year out, whatever the season is. I've give each of me three sons a freehold farm, and there'll be a goodish bit for me two daughters when their mother and I'm gone."

"Your family have not come to any harm through being brought up at a public-house then?" inquired Mr. Cassels.

The landlord's jolly face fell. "Well, to tell the truth, one of the boys does drink terrible. You see, there's the company and there's the smell of the drink always about, that's why I tried to get them all away on the land. After I turned teetotal I wanted the rest to do the same, but though the gals and me wife give in to me, the boys wouldn't. Two of 'em is steady so far, but poor Tom!" and the landlord shook his head. "Then, too, me girls is as good as gold, but one of 'em 'as took up with a young feller as is a terrible swiper."

As he spoke a flashy-looking young man accompanied by two seedy-looking companions came sauntering up and disappeared through the bar doorway. The landlord was busily employed in putting the apricots that were left into Anne's basket, for Mr. Cassels had risen to go.

"That's the cove me gal's sweet on, the swell one; he's on the bust now, 'ad half a dozen nips already this morning," he said bitterly, "and going in for another besides paying for those as is sponging on him, the fool. It's his looks and his cloes as took the gal. I'm a good mind not to serve him, but if I don't some one else will, so there it is; and she won't listen to a word her mother and I say against him."

As they walked up the winding road at the foot of the

hills between hedges of furze and sweet-briar, Anne suddenly announced—

“I shall be a teetotaller, father.”

“Why?” interrogated her father quizzically, “are you afraid somebody will want to treat you?”

“No, but I hate drink; it seems to be always making some one miserable. Poor old Mrs. Muir and other people.”

“At any rate you will be on the safe side,” he answered, “so please yourself, my little maid.”

She ran off in pursuit of a pair of young magpies not long out of the nest, that were hopping about at the side of the road; and then she stood listening to the liquid sweetness of the deep wild notes gurgled forth by half a dozen others, flying about in the adjoining paddock.

Father and daughter had left home about two hours before to walk into the hill country, for Mr. Cassels' employers had given him three days' holiday for Christmas. Hugh had started at daylight for a trip to the seaside with Laurie, and Mrs. Cassels, Jessie and baby were to keep each other company while the rest of the family were away. There were neither railways nor trams nor bicycles in those days; even omnibuses were few, and the fare often prohibitive to people of small means. In consequence, most South Australians were good walkers; and it was surprising what long distances they covered, while gaining in health and physique at the same time. In his youth Mr. Cassels had been fond of pedestrian excursions, and lately a longing for the joy of rambling had come upon him; so when this unexpected holiday arrived, he resolved to go into the hills, and take Anne with him.

The sun was hot, but a westerly breeze, with a whiff of ocean brine in it, was wafted over the plain, and became more and more apparent as they mounted the hill-slopes. They walked in leisurely fashion, and often rested, lying on the grass that was green here, though dry and russet coloured on the plain below. About noon they stopped for luncheon in the shade of a great gum, whose enormous

bole had been partly burnt out without doing any apparent injury to the huge branches, which spread over a wide area. Some logs where the wood-cutters had been at work formed seats, and a stump that had been sawn off smoothly a charming table on which to spread the meat turnovers and currant puffs of Mrs. Cassels' manufacture, and the kind old landlord's apricots.

Anne had brought the silver christening mug which had been her mother's, and derived the keenest satisfaction from running, every now and then, down the bank to fill it at a little brook that tumbled merrily into the gully among stones and ferns and rushes, and over which a rustic bridge was thrown. She flitted hither and thither, gathering wild flowers, peering into birds' nests and sniffing up the fresh air. Once a kangaroo went hopping by; and she was thrown into a state of the wildest excitement by a glimpse of a stately emu with seven little chicks following. Everything was delightful to her, for healthy, happy childhood is sweetest fairyland. The unknown surrounds it on every side, fresh surprises greet it every hour. Its present lies amid bosky dells and dimpling rivulets and amaranthine flowers; its future in the blue mists of far-away mountain tops, where happiness and glory await the traveller.

But to those who have journeyed far past the magic country where perpetual youth holds high festival, comes the knowledge that the unknown of childish days can be explored but a very little way; and that to most travellers there remains but a dusty beaten track to be trodden over and over again, the flowers vanished, the brooks dried up, the trees that sheltered from the parching heat cut down. Thank God, that to weary age, alike as to freshest youth, the mountains always beckon. "Come to us," they say, "and find the rest and joy and fragrance that have vanished from your daily path; know that the hard and weary road will not last long; your past, even at its best, was in the land of shadows; here alone is the glorious reality."

Some such thoughts were in Mr. Cassels' mind as he watched his little daughter; but he would not sadden her even by a look, and his smile was always ready when her eyes met his.

"How did that big hollow tree get burnt out in the middle without killing it, father? It's bigger than the one on the Parklands that Hugh and I went into that day it was raining, and that we have for a playhouse sometimes."

"The blacks used to burn them out for shelter places. One finds them here and there in every part of the forests around Adelaide, and I have heard it is the same in the interior."

Presently they again started on their way, and the road they climbed wound higher and higher. They passed two bullock teams, the wagons filled with great logs of wood; and then another team drawing an immense load of sweet, fragrant hay. When they reached the top of the rise Mr. Cassels turned and bade Anne look.

Near to hand, on the heights above, on the slopes rounded by the glaciers of past ages, below in the gorges steep and rugged, spread the primeval forest; billows upon billows of living green, stretching far and wide, with a little clearing showing here and a cottage roof peeping up there.

The plains lay stretched at the foot of the ranges like a gigantic picture. Deep sombre belts of sheoak and mallee, alternating with the reds and loams of the fallowed field, the bright emerald of lucerne, the yellowish brown of dried-grass pastures, the vineyards and, in the valley of the Torrens, the orange groves.

Adelaide appeared as a square map in the middle of the plains; beyond, at the horizon, was the girdling sea, a white-sailed ship crossing its bosom—above, the infinite depth of sapphire blue; over all the golden sunshine streamed, now and then a passing cloud causing shadow and sunshine to chase each other, o'er lowland and upland, with flying feet.

Anne's colour rose as she looked, there was a mist in her eyes, and without speaking she put out her hand and clasped her father's closely.

"Many a time, old girl, I have toiled up here, my pack on my back," said Mr. Cassels, pointing to the white road that went winding down below. "I always turned to look at this view, and used to rest here, and put my pack on that tree stump."

"Poor old father," said Anne, smiling up into his face, but feeling a queer constriction at her throat. "You must have been tired. Never mind though, when you get rich, we will come up here some day in a carriage like the Governor rides in, won't we? Or you could give me a dear little pony like Laurie Leigh has, and you could have a big black horse."

He smiled absently at her fairy visions. "When you are a woman, Anne, the people of South Australia will have begun to find out what an inheritance they possess in these glorious hills. A hundred years hence, perhaps in half that time, a teeming population will probably inhabit the ranges, and the forest will give place to wheat-fields and gardens."

"But what a horrid shame to cut down all the lovely trees; it would be cruel. Wheat-fields and gardens could never be so beautiful."

"Ah! but people must live, old girl. In the cities of Europe thousands are half starving who could be happy and comfortable here on a little land. An acre or two of that black gully soil would keep a family in com for through vegetable and fruit culture; and besides the hills are full of evidence of great mineral wealth. You are right though," he added, "as to the pity of destroying these grand forests; it would be wise to conserve part of them here and there as recreation grounds for future generations." His eyes sought the distant horizon and lingered musingly on the sails of the distant ship.

"There will be other changes too, iron ships worked by steam will take the place of wooden sailing vessels."

"Iron ships ! but how could ships made of iron swim in the water ? Iron sinks," asked Anne wonderingly.

"It does seem strange ; but ships are being made of iron, and they float too. The iron ship and the iron horse are coming to Australia. Steamships and railways, and a greater wonder yet, the power to speak and make oneself understood, in a few seconds, at the other end of the world. Certainly it sounds like magic."

The sun was sending long shafts of crimson light between the white tree trunks as they neared their destination.

"There is the Norton's place," said Mr. Cassels, pointing to a log house which stood on the flattened summit of a hill. Substantial outbuildings, and great haystacks were at the rear, and hard by, clad in blue shirts and moleskins, two men were working at a cross-cut saw, which was halfway through an enormous eucalyptus trunk, the lopped branches, great and small, lying all round ; smoke curled upward from where a heap of leaves were smoldering, and the air was filled with its aromatic scent.

The men stopped their work and both said "Good-evening." Anne thought she knew the face of the one nearest to her, but was not sure.

"Why, you don't mean it ! Mr. Cassels, it's never you !" said the further of the two, dropping his end of the saw, and coming to greet them. "Mother and I were only talking of you this very morning ; she will be glad to see you. We often wish you came round as you used to. Mark, you just go on stacking up some of those branches," he said, turning to the other man. "I will be back in a brace of shakes."

He led the way to the house, and called in at the open door, "Mother, here's some one you know, hurry up."

A ruddy-checked, homely-looking woman came forward ; she lifted her hands as her eyes fell on them. "Mr. Cassels ! I do declare ! Father and I were only talking of you at breakfast ! How queer you should come ; but I just am glad to see you, and this must be the little girl you used

to tell me about." She shook them both heartily by the hand, and kissed Anne. "Come away in at once.

"Ah! but we were sorry to hear you had been so ill again last year. You ought to have taken my good man's offer of a horse and trap. See the times he used to tell you you would hurt yourself. But there, it's no use talking, is it?"

Mr. Norton returned to finish his sawing, telling his wife to "cooee" when tea was ready; and Mrs. Norton took Anne into a tiny lean-to room, and told her to wash her face and brush her hair. Before obeying her hostess' mandate she drew the muslin curtain aside from a little window, which was kept open by a long hook pushed into an iron loop, and looked out, for the spell of the forest was on her.

The pungent eucalyptus scent from the fallen tree and burning leaves was borne towards her, and a blue mist was gathering over the furthest peaks of the mountains, while the sky was full of fleecy clouds, which the evening breeze had brought up. "How delightful to be up, up so high," thought she exultingly.

As she looked the setting sun turned the floating clouds into islands of crimson and gold; the billows of green seemed to touch the blue ether; a number of laughing-jacks were holding a hilarious meeting in the neighbouring trees; the sweet clear whistle of a little sapphire wren, and the answering treble of his tiny grey-frocked wife, came from a bush, on the slender twigs of which she could see them swinging. "It is like heaven," she murmured to herself.

But a savoury smell through the joints of the rough door suggested more mundane ideas, so she bathed her face at a box washstand, and combed her curly locks before the little square of glass hung on a nail in the wall; and having got out a white pinafore from her basket, donned it, and went rather shyly out of the room. She found herself in a good-sized kitchen with whitewashed walls and canvas ceiling, like those of the little bedroom; and there was an

enormous fireplace, also whitewashed. A camp oven in the middle of the fireplace, and a great pot swinging from a hook, caught her eye, as did also the bright redness of the brick floor, which latter she afterwards found her hostess went down on her knees to scrub every week, with a brick and spring water.

She was put into a big wooden chair made soft and comfortable with patchwork cushions. Her father, she was told, was resting in his room, until the evening meal was ready ; and she was bidden rest also after her long walk. So she lay back in the capacious depths of the armchair and watched the mistress of the house moving briskly to and fro, spreading an unbleached tablecloth on the great deal table, and setting the knives and forks, and a gaily painted tray full of thick cups and saucers. She chatted away to Anne all the time, telling her that she had no nice little girls, but instead five rough, rude boys, though the proud mother-look on her face contradicted the disparaging description.

Presently she went to the door and gave three shrill "cooees," then came back and began dishing up the meat and vegetables smoking hot, and poured boiling water on the tea she had previously put into the huge tin teapot.

Very soon five boys, the eldest some years older than Anne, the youngest about three, came racing in, very damp of hair and rosy of face from their wash in a wooden tub near the well. Mr. Norton and his assistant sawyer also seemed to have performed their ablutions in the open air, for Anne saw them vigorously drying themselves outside the door.

When the man Mr. Norton had called "Mark" sat down, Mr. Cassels spoke to him ; and then Anne remembered she had seen him standing outside the *Queen's Head* and also passing their house riding on horseback, Laurie beside him. He was very silent during all the clatter of knives and forks and cups, and buzz of conversation, but none seemed to notice it.

When the meal was over Mrs. Norton and her two

elder boys cleared away the dishes, the other brothers being bidden to take Anne into the front room, where wonderful things were to be seen in the shape of a big polished cedar table and chairs of the same, also some crochet antimacassars and a woolwork cushion, the latter depicting a brilliant scarlet and green parrot. When these had been done reverence to, one of the boys unlocked the glass doors of a bookcase set on a small table that stood in a recess beside the chimney, and brought out a big family Bible and a large copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, both illustrated. Now Anne was in her glory, expounding the meaning of the pictures she knew and guessing those she did not, until the small boys were amazed at her erudition.

They then all gathered together again in the kitchen, for the mountain air was chill, and the great red log burning on the wide hearth looked most pleasant. There were two little wooden stools inside the enormous fireplace, and Anne enjoyed the novelty of sitting on one of them, the boys scrambling as to who should sit opposite and gaze at her dark-framed face showing up against the white chimney wall. For a strange little girl was as good as a whole art gallery to them. The only girls they knew lived three miles away, and were verging on long frocks, had snub noses and freckles, and, compared with Anne, seemed generally uninteresting.

Their pressing attentions became somewhat boring to her at last, and she was glad when their mother packed them off one by one to beds made up in all sorts of corners, for the circumscribed area of the log house was taxed to its utmost to make room for the new-comers. Anne was allowed to take her wooden stool, and sit beside the big cushioned chair occupied by her father, and listen to the chat about old times, and the neighbouring farms where Mr. Cassels used to pay his periodical visits. But at length her eyes began to close sleepily, so that Mrs. Norton carried her off, and even before she was properly tucked in she was sleeping the sweet sleep of childhood.

The next day was filled with delights. She joined with zest in hunting for hen eggs ; she watched the milking with keenest enjoyment, and the feeding of the poultry and the various animals ; though, much to the boys' astonishment, the pigs did not please her fastidious taste. When they saw her put her handkerchief to her face and walk off from the stys, they thought she was crying, and followed awestruck and anxious. When they found there were no tears and she tried to explain her aversion, they listened without comprehension. A pig was a pig, and their pigs were the best in the district, were the fattest and could grunt and squeal louder than other people's ; the smell was the smell there always was about pigs, and therefore why any one should object to it, and besides say that pigs were horrid, ugly things, was a conundrum that no boy could solve.

In the heat of discussion and clash of tongues, Robert, the eldest boy, suddenly remembered that his mother often spoke of the delicious smell of strawberries ; and though, personally, he did not see much difference between the smell of pigs and the smell of strawberries—at least nothing to make a fuss about—yet he was aware that the duty of a host requires a certain deference to be shown to the prejudices of guests. When therefore a lull fell, he suggested an adjournment to where the strawberry bed grew in the black soil of the gully. To his relief, Anne graciously acceded, even with enthusiasm ; and soon all five boys were lifting the green leaves and hunting for the late fruit. The ripest and most scarlet berries were brought to supply one little mouth, the five servitors taking only those that did not seem good enough to be offered to their young princess.

There was a potato patch near, and Anne saw the man, Mark, hoeing up the furrows. Presently, when she was accepting a green leaf with two big berries on it Robert held out to her, a voice behind made her nearly drop them.

"Have you seen Laurence Leigh lately, little girl ?"

Mark had come over to the group and stood there, hoe

in hand. She told him that Laurie had been with them on Christmas Day, and in answer to further questions that he was, as far as she knew, quite well.

"Tell him that you saw me, please, and that I am getting on all right, and expect to be able to go back in two or three weeks. Don't forget, please. I wrote to him last week, but I know he will be glad to hear you saw me."

Anne promised, and he returned to his work.

She had heard Mr. Norton tell her father that Mark had come from a neighbouring farm, where he had been staying for some time; and that he was one of the best men to work he had ever employed.

"Do you know Mark?" said Robert, surprised.

"I never spoke to him before," replied Anne, "but he works at a public-house near us, and I have often seen him in the street."

"He told father he used to get drunk; that was why he came up here, for he wanted to get where the public-houses were a long way away; and father and mother never have drink."

"If I were the Queen," said Anne, "I would shut up all the public-houses."

"Oh! but the Queen couldn't," said Robert. "Father says there are lots of things she can't do; it's the Parliament makes the laws."

"Then what's the good of being Queen, if she can't do what she wants; and why doesn't the Parliament shut up the public-houses then, when they make people bad and miserable?"

Robert had no answer ready, so they returned to the more profitable employment of strawberry hunting.

The next day Anne and her father parted regretfully from the hospitable Nortons; though shortly before the time came to leave Anne and Robert had rather a passage of arms.

She was standing at the door ready dressed for starting when Robert came behind her, and, seeing no one in sight,

sentimental feeling overcame him so much that he stooped and kissed the bright cheek nearest to him. Anne started back, the smile on her lips vanished, and raising her hand, she dealt him a sounding slap on the side of his face with a sudden fury that astounded him. The blow caught him on the eye, and made it water, and his discomfiture was completed by the bursts of laughter from his father and Mr. Cassels, who had appeared on the scene.

"You are a little virago, Anne, when the fit takes you," said her father, tapping one of her blazing cheeks. "Never mind, Robert, my boy; she never would let any one kiss her from the time she was a baby, except her own people."

"You needn't be so cross," said Robert to her when they were left alone. He was holding his hand over his smarting eye. "I didn't hurt you."

"I hate people kissing me; it's impertinent," she answered, scowling at him. But presently they had made peace, and the boys accompanied their departing guests some distance on their way; then drew up and remained in one place as long as father and daughter were in sight, each party waving to the other as they turned, until a bend in the road hid them from each other.

CHAPTER VI

A BIRTHDAY PICNIC

“ JESSIE, isn't that a knock at the door ? ”

Mrs. Cassels was taking from the camp oven a loaf of bread ; it was beautifully browned and smelt as only good home-made bread does. Another nose beside the baker's was regaled, and a voice called out in a merry tone, “ Please, may I have a bit ? ”

“ Come in, Laurie ; I know now who knocked.” The door opened wide, and Laurie came into the kitchen, cap in hand, a brown-paper parcel under his arm, and a smaller white one in his hand. He had become as one of the family ever since a day when Jessie had fallen into the lake at the botanical gardens and Laurie had fished her out, drenched and muddy, wrapped her in his coat and carried her home to her mother, whose heart had been completely won by his promptitude and kindness.

While Mrs. Cassels cut off a hot crust and buttered it, Laurie sat down, and then Jessie appeared.

“ Why, Jessie, where have you been ? Why did not you answer ? It is naughty not to answer when you are called.”

“ You didn't hear my speaks, my speaks is very little sometimes,” answered Jessie, taking the piece of bread and butter her mother held out.

Mrs. Cassels and Laurie chatted for a little time, and then when Jessie had again disappeared, Laurie said, “ Mrs. Cassels——”

“ Yes, Laurie ? ” as he stopped hesitatingly.

“ This is something for Anne's birthday. Would you mind giving it her, please ? ” and he held out the larger parcel.

“ Oh, Laurie ! it is kind of you, and she will be so pleased that you remembered.”

He laughed, relieved that the presentation was over.

"But why don't you give it to her yourself, Laurie?"

"Oh, I'd rather not," he answered hastily; "I saw her going up the street with Louise Mitchell, so I thought it was a good chance. But see, Mrs. Cassels, what do you think I have got here? It is for you."

He carefully unwound the white paper and disclosed a little flower-pot, full of green leaves and purple flowers.

"Oh, Laurie!" and she bent rapturously over the pot, from which a strong perfume filled the room. "Violets, oh! delicious; I have never seen them since we left home." There were tears in her eyes, and she was silent a minute as she bent over the little cups of sweetness; for they bore her back to the happy past. "People used to say that they would not grow here, but these could not be more fresh and healthy. Where did you get them?"

"I saw them in a shop window and thought of you, so went in and got them." He took up his cap. "I must go now and get my Latin done, if I am to take a holiday to-morrow."

Ever since Hugh had mentioned that Anne's birthday was in September, Laurie had been wishing he could make her a birthday present, and after considerable cogitation, and various artful drawings of opinion from his grandmother and Keziah, as to what girls liked best for presents, had invested the liberal supply of pocket money which he had been saving for some weeks in a rosewood workbox, fitted up in accordance with the shopkeeper's suggestions.

"Don't forget there is a baby asleep in the house, and bang the door, young man," admonished Mrs. Cassels. "The omnibus leaves King William Street at ten o'clock; you will not forget."

"No fear of that," answered Laurie heartily, and took his leave.

Things had been very quiet at the *Queen's Head* for several days, and this evening, after he had finished his homework, Laurie put up his books and strolled into the large dining-room, which was only dimly lighted by a small

lamp, and threw himself on a sofa there. Across the passage was the bar parlour, which he was strictly forbidden by his grandmother to enter when customers were about ; but he had often, from his present retreat, amused himself by listening to the vagaries of the slightly elevated toppers ; though he always honourably obeyed his grandmother's commands to, as much as possible, keep out of sight and hearing when drunks were about.

Four people were sitting at one end of the table playing cards. One was Mark, another a robust-looking old man of over seventy years of age, and the other two were respectably dressed young men of the labouring class, their slop-made suits having evidently not long left the shopman's hands. "Daddy," as the ancient was commonly called, had got just through his third glass of beer, at which stage he usually became exceedingly talkative.

"My poor old gal says to me, 'Don't take more'n a shilling, and then yer can't spen' it ; besides, I can't get no more credit at the butcher's, and there's on'y a bit o' bread in the house, so leave me t'other shillin',' so I did, fer she's bin a good ole gal ter me, and I hain't bad ter 'er, wen I hain't in drink, and heaven then I scarce ever lam a 'and on 'er."

"'Old yer jaw, Daddy," said Tom, one of the young men, who was Daddy's partner. "Look out wot yer playin'."

Daddy devoted himself to the game for a minute or two, then his stentorian tones were again uplifted.

"She's a good ole gal, she is, she says nothin' ter me, wen I bin on the bust, only her eries, an' gets under the table, or the bed, or 'er runs outside, an' we bin wed more'n fifty years. Wen the gold diggin's bruk out, 'er brother 'im and me was pardners, an' us agreed I should keep on 'ere, and 'im should go to the diggin's, an' whotsomever we made us wor to share and share alike. 'E wor away a matter of a year, and I did 'ear tell as 'e made a matter of two or three 'undert puns ; but 'e never sed nothin' ter me about it wen 'e come back, and I wouldn't say nothin' ter 'e, as 'e didn't. But nex year as we was startin' to go round the

country for the shearin', Ted says ter me, 'Look ere, we might as well go pardners in this 'ere shearin'.' 'Old 'ard there,' says I; 'no, yer don't, there'll be no pardners this 'ere time,' says I 'Cos why? Becos wen we was pardners afore, you never give me a penny of the money you got at the diggin's, and besides that while yer shearin' one sheep, I can shear three. No, there'll be no pardners this time.'"

"There, I knew you couldn't play and talk too," growled Tom with an oath, exasperated as the game ended in favour of the others.

"Well, wot do it matter, a game's a game, and there's yer sixpence. My ole gal didn't know I had that yer sixpence in t'other pocket, and I never sed nothin', only leff it there. Now I got no money. I got no marbles, cum and 'ave a drink? Some more of that whisky I 'ad las' night. It was reel good whisky. I felt it burnin' me stummik all the way 'ome."

"A nice one, you, to say, 'Come and have a drink,' when you 'aven't a copper," said Tom.

"Mark 'ere will chalk it up to me," said Daddy.

"No I won't," answered Mark; "you know very well Mrs. Johnstone's motto, 'No cash, no drink.'"

"All right, then yer stand it then; 'ave a glass wi' us like a man."

"I want no glass," said Mark in an angry tone, and not heeding the invitation to stand treat, he got up and walked out of the room. The matter was settled by Harry, the fourth member of the group, offering to pay for drinks all round, so he rang the bell and Daddy gave the order majestically, "Three fer us genelum," and a little Irishman coming in at the moment added, "'Nother fer this genelum."

Tom and Harry had been working on a station for two years as knock-about hands, and each had brought a good cheque to town. They had banked most of the money; and besides the comfortable clothes they were wearing, they had in the bedroom they shared two stout

portmanteaux filled with a fairly good outfit. Previous experience had taught them that at a certain stage of their drinking bouts they grew helpless; and for that reason they had placed most of the money in safe keeping, and only kept enough in hand to pay for what they considered a moderate spree; purposing to return to their work in a week's time.

As Laurie left the dining-room, old Daddy was attempting to sing in a growling bass a song beginning, "The boys, they is all of 'em welkim."

He read for about an hour, and when he strolled back to his post of observation several more men were in the bar parlour. The festal cup had been circulating freely, and Daddy was staggering about addressing himself with, "Stan' up ter yer drink, ole man." Then he leaned up against the door-post with the remark, "Mos' deci'lely I'm a bit hoff."

The little Irishman, also very shaky on his legs, was announcing to first one, and then another, "I'm a man of ancient birth, through marriage with me wife, who was a O'Flynn, the biggest man in County Omagh."

"It beats me 'ow stoopid some blokes gits wen they're drunk," said Tom, who was sitting at the table with a great ink spot on his nose, the bow of his tie at the back of his neck, and his elbow in a pool of ink that was slowly dripping from a small bottle that, without noticing, he had knocked over. There was a pen and paper also covered with ink; for he had asked for writing materials, having been under the impression half an hour before that he was going to indite a letter; but as soon as the things were brought had straightway forgotten all about his intention.

"Now I can get drunk," he continued in a thick voice, "an' never git stoopid. I'm proud of gittin' drunk sometimes, but I never git stoopid."

"None on yer ain't much of a height, yer should just see me bhoys, Pat and Mick; an' I'm the shortest of all me sons," shouted the little Irishman.

"It beats me 'ow stoopid some blokes gits," repeated Tom.

"Are yer 'dressin' a me?" inquired Daddy, attempting a ferocious cock of his hat, but only succeeding in knocking it over his left ear.

"Ya! yer not much," said Tom, moving his arm, so that his hand lay in the ink-pool.

"I'll tak' a round on ter yer, come hout," invited Daddy.

Tom pushed up the long hair from his forehead, and immediately the upper part of his face matched his nose in colour. "You?" he inquired contemptuously, poking his mottled countenance forward.

"Yarss, me," answered Daddy, swaying backwards and forwards, as he tried to leave the door-post.

"Yer ain't much," said Tom, sticking out his chin.

"Ain't us? Come hout, do 'e 'ear?"

"Wot's the matter with yer, ole man, want ter fight?" inquired Tom jeeringly.

Daddy made a rush forward, but fell against the table, knocking the ink-bottle and two tumblers on the floor with a crash; Tom not moving from his seat, but continuing at intervals to adorn his countenance and clothes with fresh strokes of black art. Harry now intervened, telling his brother and Daddy to "shake 'ands like genelum," and then he would stand treat again.

After considerable exhortation, Tom was helped forward to where Daddy sat, and attempted to grasp the other's hand, but instead fell on him. Daddy took this for an embrace, and, unconscious that some of Tom's decorations had been transferred in big daubs to his cheek and ear, averred that "'e allus noo the chap was a reel good sort an' a reel genelum." Thereupon more libations all round, paid for by Tom and Harry.

Laurie went away to his room when the reconciliation took place, feeling that he had stayed rather longer than he should, though none of the bar occupants would have been described by a publican as *quite* drunk. As there

seemed no prospect of his grandmother leaving the bar, he retired to bed.

He had been rather troubled about Mark lately, for though the man would not acknowledge himself ill, he looked worn and anxious, and avoided everybody as much as possible, even Laurie. His customary silence seemed turning to moroseness, and Laurie cudgelled his brains as to the cause, but without success. Mark had strictly abstained from drink for nearly a year, and Laurie had inwardly laughed when old Daddy had invited him to drink. "Fancy asking Mark," said he to himself as he undressed, and he laughed aloud. Mark would never drink again, for he had assured him over and over again that now he never felt any inclination to taste it.

He had told of the terrible struggles he had gone through during the first weeks he was in the hills. How he would long and long for but one mouthful, and that at times he felt he must have it, or go mad; and was over and over again on the point of rushing to the nearest public-house. How he had fought the same fight, day after day, night after night, week after week; getting a little stronger each time he conquered.

He told of the horrible dreams, the headless men, the unutterably hideous women who, in visions both by night and day, tormented him. How loathsome things crept about the floor, slowly, slowly creeping towards him, on to the bed, over the pillow. How awful eyes followed him, compelling him to gaze back, making it impossible to look aside.

How one night he dreamed that some one offered him a glass of beer, and that he put out his hand and took the devilish thing, as he called it. That he was just placing it to his lips when he looked up and saw Laurie at the door watching. The shock woke him, trembling with fear, and bathed in a cold sweat, feeling sick and faint. When he at length realized it was but a dream, he got up, and falling on his knees, with strong cries and tears and sobs, prayed for strength to resist, and begged that God

would slay him then and there rather than permit him to fall again. And then, how from that time, the devil fled away conquered, and he was at last free from the curse.

All this Laurie thought of as he lay awake, and he exulted in having been permitted to draw poor Mark back from the horrible pit into which he had fallen. But this change during the last two or three weeks he could not understand. He had asked him once if he were not well ; but did not repeat the question, for Mark's manner showed resentment. "Perhaps he is beginning to worry again over that dreadful past of his," thought Laurie. "Oh ! what a curse drink is, what misery it causes ! I do wish grandmother did not sell it."

He shut his eyes and tried to go to sleep, but a vision of Anne looking at the workbox next morning made him smile and open them again. What a queer little thing she was ! So clever, so passionate, so full of feeling for others. He recalled how she had cried once when telling him what it was that had made Mrs. Muir, the old Scotch-woman who sometimes washed and scrubbed for Mrs. Cassels, so sad and worn ; "ugly" was the term he had used in speaking of the poor woman ; and Anne had flashed round indignantly on him, and asked if he knew what had made Mrs. Muir look as she did. Surprised, he had answered, "No," and she repeated to him the tale the poor old woman had told her.

The Muirs were Scotch peasants, who were among the first colonists, and after some years of hard work, were doing fairly well. Then came the Victorian gold discoveries and Thomas Muir, an honest persevering man, but subject to occasional fits of drinking, determined to try his luck there, and take with him his two sons—youths still in their teens—while his wife and little daughter remained behind.

He was from the first very fortunate, and, at the end of twelve months, wrote to his wife, telling her that he had made enough for them to live on comfortably, and that he would soon return. About a month later there arrived

a letter from the elder son saying that the date of their departure from Victoria was fixed, and that he and his brother were longing to be at home with their mother and sister, and hoped to be soon.

Both he and his brother had, however, been much troubled about their father, for he had celebrated the clearing up of his claim by a drinking bout, into which he had been tempted by some men who were working near them, and whom the sons distrusted exceedingly. Young Muir said also that he was afraid their father had told these men of the amount of gold he had in his possession, and which he would not be persuaded to bank. However, they hoped to leave in another week, and get away from the set with whom their father had become entangled.

That was the last word Mrs. Muir had from husband and sons. Months went by, but they came not, neither any letter, nor any message. The police were informed, but the inquiry set on foot by them resulted in little.

The three Muirs had left the diggings a few days after the last letter that Mrs. Muir received had been posted. They were driving a couple of horses in a cart, and it was supposed took their gold with them. They were traced two days' journey, then they disappeared. The strictest inquiry failed to elicit more; not a vestige, not a sign, further rewarded the search.

It was ascertained that the men with whom Muir had been drinking also disappeared about the same time; and circumstances seemed to indicate that a preconcerted attack had been made by them on their victims, whom they had murdered and robbed, and then thrown the dead bodies down some abandoned shaft, the gang afterwards driving off with the cart and horses.

The agony suffered by the wife and mother through those months of uncertainty and waiting was terrible, and made her an old woman long before her time, with a face marred and a body enfeebled through excess of grief. Her money gradually dwindled away, but she managed to support herself by washing and charring, and the daugh-

ter, when old enough, supplemented her mother's earnings by sewing. For the last year or two the whole burden had fallen upon Catherine Muir, until the wife and mother went to look for her husband and boys, as Anne had often heard her say she longed to do.

"Drink is a beast," said Anne, stamping her foot, as was sometimes her wont when excited. "If it hadn't been for drink, Mrs. Muir would have her husband and her boys, and they would all be happy together now."

Laurie admitted that drink was a beast, and told her he would not have anything to do with it when he was a man, and now to-night he silently renewed his vow.

* * * * *

The clock struck six as Anne sat up in bed and looked round for the birthday presents that she knew right well would be there ; for in the Cassels family each birthday was marked by a little festival. The light was only struggling through the blind, but there was enough for what she wanted ; and soon she wakened Jessie and then Hugh to participate in her joy. The workbox was a crowning delight, possessing a real key that would turn in the lock with a click that made sweetest music—a tiny pair of scissors that snipped paper beautifully, a wee silver thimble, a stiletto for making eyelet holes, and a bodkin. Then there were reels of coloured silks—pink, green, blue, yellow, purple, red, brown—no end of them, all lying in crimson satin nests, and a drawer to lift in and out, and a satin pocket in the lid, filled with note-paper and envelopes. Laurie *was* kind, and she would always love him for ever and ever, she repeated to herself.

That was a birthday that Anne often looked back upon in after years ; sometimes with aching heart and swelling throat, sometimes with smiles that were akin to tears.

The omnibus ride was in itself an event, and a treat to children who scarcely knew any other form of locomotion than their own legs. The springless vehicle threw them against each other as it jolted over the uneven roads ;

but that was all the more fun, though Mrs. Cassels with the baby in her arms scarcely looked at it in the same light.

Neither did Mr. Cassels, who also made one of the party. He had been very unwell of late, quite unfit for business, and his kind employers had again made him take a few days' holiday.

Every now and then the omnibus stopped to absorb more people, until the passengers looked like trussed fowls, as Hugh whispered to his mother. But the children did not mind the squeezing any more than the bumping, and found great amusement in watching some of their fellow-travellers who objected to both. There was a very fat man who made queer grunts when the wheels came in contact with a larger stone than ordinary, or bounded in and out of holes. There was a cross-looking woman, with two big parcels in her lap, who said, "Drat it!" when a lurch of the coach knocked her bonnet to one side. There was a thin woman, with a basket of oranges, who sat opposite Mrs. Cassels; she kept leaning forward and calling the baby "a little dear," and each time there was a big jolt said "lor!" and during the journey distributed half her stock of oranges among her fellow-passengers, so that all the bus-load, even the cross-looking woman, became quite friendly.

Too soon the delightful ride to the foot of the hills came to an end. They had then to walk about a mile up the gully to the little waterfall near where they proposed picnicking. Laurie seized the biggest basket, and Hugh, not without grumbling, the other, and when they arrived at their destination scampered off, Anne and Jessie following.

But Laurie remained to spread a shawl on the grass for the baby to sleep on after he grew tired of trotting about, and then he gathered sticks and made a fire, so that Mrs. Cassels could boil the billy and have a cup of tea, for which she said she was longing.

It was a cloudless sky; the air filled with the scent of wattle and thousands of wild flowers that carpeted the

earth, and of which the children soon had their hands full. There were trees to climb, and bird's-nests to hunt for, and Anne did her full share of both, rather to the scandal and terror of her mother ; and there was the waterfall tumbling over the crag above, and falling in spray into the fern-wreathed pool below, to stand before and wonder at.

They pulled up numbers of great horehound bushes, of which there was a miniature forest, and of these built a hut, and made an avenue leading up to it. Then they gathered branches of wattle blossom from the trees that grew all along the bank of the creek, and stuck the golden blooms and great bunches of wild flowers all over their hut, inside and out and decorated the throne of piled up gum boughs. Themselves they adorned with long streamers of scarlet runner, winding them round their hats and waists.

Mr. Cassels said that as Anne was queen of the revels she must wear a crown ; and he wove together a mass of the scarlet blossoms, setting it on her dark curls with mock solemnity, after she had taken her seat on the throne. While she sat there, her subjects marched thrice round the outside of the hut and did obeisance to her when passing the door. Then all stood opposite and sang a little song beginning, "Hail to the birthday Queen," which Mr. Cassels had written for the great occasion, and set to a simple well-known air.

As soon as the ceremonies were over, the queen descended from her throne, and danced and skipped about so much—too excited to keep still more than a minute at a time—that her crown kept getting out of place and needed constant readjustment.

As the sun mounted higher they were glad to get in the shade. A fallen tree overhung the creek, and on the trunk the children sat, dipping their bare feet in the cool water while they fished for the slender-bodied minnows that could be seen darting in and out among the roots at the bottom of the deep pools. Anne bent down to see her reflection, and Laurie watched her with admiring eyes,

thinking he had never seen so pretty a picture : the white cotton dress and crimson wreath showing up the dark hair and eyes and bare arched feet.

As she bent her crown fell off and floated down stream ; whereupon, with shouts and shrieks of laughter, they all raced to intercept it, startling a black hen who had stolen her nest in the lush grass. Laurie fished the wreath out and hung it on a bush to dry, and then they ran and found the nest—ten snowy white eggs amid the deep green, one just laid. They had seen a rough log cabin the other side of the hill, and Mr. Cassels bade them take the eggs to the probable owner. The low door of the cabin was framed in sweet peas and roses, and a bee colony stood under an orange tree near by. The woman who came at their knock said the hen was hers, she was always stealing her nests, but they were welcome to the eggs ; and then when they were half way through the paddock she called them back and plucked an orange for each.

They finished their fishing, and stuck the fish they had caught on thin sticks ; and Hugh grilled them over the coals, and distributed them to the party, who ate them with bread and butter, and declared they had never tasted anything so delicious. The boiled eggs too possessed an equally piquant flavour, as did also the mugfuls of weak tea.

Never was sky more perfectly blue, nor grass more green, nor air more sweet than on that day ; and as Laurie watched the billy bubbling over their camp fire and ate from one of the pretty but inconvenient dishes that Anne had made of broad dock leaves, he wished it could never end.

But desires are futile to arrest the relentless march of time, and soon, too soon, the long beautiful day was ended, and he was again turning in at the back gate of the *Queen's Head*. The place was very quiet and, not seeing his grandmother about, he entered the big dining-room to look for her there.

As he passed through a slight noise made him turn

round. A man was lying on the sofa in a drunken sleep, breathing heavily, his coat off, his shirt torn and open at the throat, a strong smell of brandy exuding from his breath.

It was Mark.

CHAPTER VII

BITTER FRUIT

“No, Laurie, there must be an end of it. I am sick of him, as well as the others. He shan’t eat or sleep here again.

As she spoke Mrs. Johnstone filled a jug with beer, and handed it to the little Brown girl who stood waiting.

“There now,” she said, dropping the coppers into the till, “that is the second time this morning that child has come for beer, and it is not nine o’clock. No wonder the children are half starved and go about begging for food, while that horrid woman spends every farthing she can lay hands on in drink. Yesterday over twenty children came for drink, I counted them out of curiosity; and I must say I hate that part of the business. Oh, dear! those detestable flies, what a mess they make of everything, the smell of beer seems to attract them,” and she vigorously attacked the black hordes with a feather brush, trying to whisk them out of the door.

“Why, here is that wretched Harry back again!” she said, turning angrily towards the miserable hang-dog figure that stood in place of the bright-looking, comfortably dressed young man who entered the bar a fortnight before.

He came shambling up, trembling, dirty, unshorn, ragged. “Tom says if you’ll give him a bottle of brandy, on’y one, e’ll take ’is Bible oath, e’ll go it ’onest and pay you first pay ’e gits.”

Mrs. Johnstone laughed unpleasantly. “Oh yes! a few oaths more or less wouldn’t make any difference to

him ; but I've told you dozens of times, I never give credit."

"Well, I didn't want to come, only 'e made me. Do give us just one bottle, missis, and we'll start off at once, and not arst for nothin' else. Do. I feel so ill, you can see I'm all in a shake," and the wretched being held out his hands imploringly to her.

"Just what you said yesterday," she answered coldly, "and I was fool enough to give you a bottle, knowing quite well it was giving, not selling ; and then what did you do ? Why, both of you sat down by the side of the road and drank it, and then came sneaking back, and have been hanging about ever since ; sneaking in behind every one who comes into the bar. and sponging on them. I've kept you both in food the last three days. No, not another bite or sup will you get here without you've the money in your hand to pay for it ; so be off."

Harry shuffled out, muttering curses under his breath.

"They're all alike, not a bit of gratitude in them. I've let those two men stay here for days since they got rid of their money, as well as that Mark ; just out of pity, and to try and straighten them up a bit before they started out to look for work. But a lot of thanks I get. Any one else would have turned them out the moment their money was gone."

"But Mark ? "

"No, Laurie. As I said before, I put up with Mark because you made such a fuss about trying to get him off the drink ; though I knew all the time how it would be. I've seen too many of them. When once it gets into their blood, it's no use bothering, they're bound to kill themselves, and the sooner the better."

"But, gran, if you would only send him to the Summit ? "

"Yes, and have all the old bother over again. Not if I know it. Look what the last fortnight has been ; he and those other two fellows, collecting all the riff-raff of the place, never giving me a minute's peace, day or night ; swilling and cursing and swearing, though to do him justice

Mark does not swear much. But the others—Tom especially—are awful. The sooner they all clear off the better. Mark is done as barman; and goodness knows where I shall get a decent one; they nearly all either drink or steal. I suppose I must go and try the registry offices this morning. I'm sure I'm nearly worried out of my life with one thing and another."

Laurie turned hopelessly away; he could see it would be wasting breath to try further persuasion. Mark had never stopped drinking since he broke out. If he partly regained his senses for a moment, the seven devils of remorse drove him on; and he spent every penny he possessed in the effort to satisfy the hideous craving that enslaved him, but only to find it still crying, "Give, give."

"Go and ask Keziah for some jelly, and take it to Mrs. Cassels with my compliments, and ask after Mr. Cassels," said Mrs. Johnstone in a kinder tone. To deny Laurie anything always gave her pain. "And wait a minute, you might as well take a bottle of that old port wine with you too."

But as she prepared to go towards the cellar, and before Laurie could leave the bar, Tom, backed up by Harry, came sidling in, while several men who had been hanging on to them during the past fortnight, always on the lookout for drinks or stray coins, stood outside.

"I say, missis," said Tom, "you ain't a going to do me bad, an' send me off without nuffin to wet me whistle, are you?"

"I've told you time after time that I won't give you anything more, unless you have the money to pay for it," answered Mrs. Johnstone. Turning to Laurie she said in a low tone, "Go away now, I will give you the wine presently," and Laurie went out, while she took her feather brush and began dusting the bottles on the shelves.

She whisked in and out, always keeping a vigilant eye on the bottles for fear the men should take anything when her back was turned for a minute. Tom followed her about, begging in a whining tone for a bottle of brandy—

of whisky—of beer ; finally for one glass, only one glass.

“ Now look here, you Tom,” she said, turning round on him at last when her patience was exhausted. “ You might as well talk to a brick wall, nothing more will you get, not a glass, not a drop.”

“ You mean that, do you ? ” he demanded, scowling darkly at her. He was more filthy, more disreputable-looking even than Harry, for he had been in several fights, and his face was bruised, and the dried blood was streaked all down one side of his face. As he stood glaring at her she knew it would not take much to make him attempt murder. But it was not the first time she had faced men who would gladly have beaten the life out of her, and been only held back by her fearlessness.

“ Yes, I do mean it,” she answered, looking steadily at him, “ so you may as well go without any further bother.”

“ Then curse you,” he shouted. “ You’ve ’ad a ’undred and twenty pounds from us, and our portmantles, an’ all our cloes, everything you could lay yer claws on, and now you’ve got everything you turn us out like dogs. For two pins I’d knock yer ’ead off with this ’ere chair,” and he caught hold of one, and brandished it in his muscular arms.

Some of the other men tried to interpose, to coax the chair from and quieten him ; but to little purpose. Mrs. Johnstone beckoned to one of them, put something in his hand, and he went out hastily.

“ Yes, send for the perlice,” shrieked Tom. “ Now you’ve stripped us clean, set the perlice on us. There wasn’t no sending fer the perlice while we ’ad our cheques and cloes. Oh no ! You kept us out of their way, wot might have made us go to another pub, an’ then you, you ole Jezebeel, wouldn’t a got it all.”

“ You lie,” she said, looking calmly at him, though her face was pale. “ I never tried to keep you, or any other man here. Indeed, I’d much rather such as you never came ; and you know quite well, you worried and bothered me into taking your portmanteaux and clothes.”

“ Worried ! ” he laughed derisively, “ and yer wasn’t

glad ter be worried? Oh no!" and he burst into a string of filthy adjectives, shouting them as he passed out of the door, in compliance with Harry's urgent entreaties and warning that a trooper was to be seen coming along.

As the posse of men disappeared, Mrs. Johnstone drew a deep breath, and her usually healthy handsome face looked haggard and worn. She gave a start and a feeble smile as she saw Laurie at her elbow, then exclaimed peevishly, "What do you want here? I do wish you would keep away when those men are about."

"I came for the wine," answered Laurie briefly. "Oh, gran! why don't you bring that wretch to court and punish him? If I were a man I would half kill him; it is dreadful."

"Don't trouble about it, dear lad," she said, trying to speak lightly. "It would never do to summons him; that sort of thing gets into the newspapers, and would lose us a lot of custom. It isn't the first time by a good many I've had to stand their tongues, and it won't be the last, I guess; but ill words break no bones. If you want to make money, you must put up with disagreeables; and we don't often get them so bad: that Tom is a brute."

"I should think it would be better not to make money that way," said Laurie rebelliously.

"Now that will do, Laurie. I have managed the business a good many years, and it is not the place of a lad like you to tell his grandmother what she should do. As if I haven't enough annoyance, you must begin to worry me."

But though she spoke thus she felt humiliated that the boy she loved so dearly should have heard such opprobrious terms applied to her, and it was bitter also that the hangers-on should have been listening to it all. She answered the police trooper almost wearily when he came to inquire the meaning of her message, and was not so well able to hold her own as usual.

"Threatening you and using bad language, yet you won't summon him. Well, Mrs. Johnstone, I must say that if you want your house to continue to be known as a

respectable one, you must not allow the people to frequent it who have been here lately. I should have thought the fighting that went on last Wednesday would have been enough for you ; and if you had sent for me then, and turned the men into the street, where I could have arrested them, as you wouldn't give them in charge, it would have been more to your credit than smuggling them off to their rooms before I came. If this sort of thing happens again, it will end in you being summoned yourself for allowing disorderly characters to assemble on your premises," and the trooper went off in high dudgeon, for he had been called away when he was in the middle of making up his reports, and "all for nothing" as he said ; though he proceeded, when he got back to the station, to take down his revolver, and saddle his horse. It would be best to make sure they were gone.

"The same old game," he grumbled to himself, "selling stuff till the men are mad drunk, then of course we are called in and asked to protect the confounded people who are the cause of all the mischief. If they had to bear the results of their trade, they wouldn't be in such a hurry to serve men who have had too much already. I wish," he ended vigorously, "the fellows had smashed every bottle on her shelves, and given her a black eye into the bargain ; it would have served her right."

After Mrs. Johnstone had sent Laurie away with the port she called Keziah to mind the bar, then went to her bedroom and, locking the door, took out all the money she had in her safe. There was the amount Tom and Harry had put into the bank when they first came to Adelaide, intending it should be a nest-egg for future savings. There was what ought to have gone to feed and clothe the half-starved, half-naked Brown children, and what old Daddy had filched from the poor, tottering, sick old woman who had the misfortune to be his wife, and who slaved with her needle to earn the few shillings that kept soul and body together, and of which he had robbed her. There were the few pounds Mark had saved ; there were the

youths' sixpences and the reprobates' shillings; there was even the money lost women could not have earned without the aid of strong drink. Most of it represented tears and groans and remorse and wretchedness indescribable; but as she counted it up and made a note of the total she said to herself, that part at least had been earned by honest board and lodging, and by selling alcohol to people who were able to partake of it temperately. And the salve she always applied to her conscience, that if she did not take the other money, some one else would, she tried now. But it did not seem to act satisfactorily, and as she put on her walking attire she debated within herself whether it would not be best to sell out at once, and retire with what she had already made.

Was the money really worth the price paid for it? In her present mood, she almost felt inclined to answer in the negative. More than once lately Laurie had begged her to give up the public-house; and all the time she was walking into town, to the bank and the registry offices, and then home, she went over the pros and cons again and again.

Laurie wished to go to one of the English universities when he was old enough. If she gave up the public-house, what should she do with herself while he was away? It would be so dull living in a house by herself after being all her life in the bustle and whirl of business. Should she go home to England too? No, she had always disliked the winters there, and after so many years of sunny Australia she would be less able to bear them than before. Besides, she knew it would be better for Laurie's social success if she were at a distance.

It was true that if she sold out now she might, with economy, have enough to pay for his education, and provide a cottage for Keziah and herself; but there would not be much margin, and though the brewery shares would almost certainly turn out a good thing, one could never be sure of one's bird until it was safely caged.

And then, after all, why should she feel so unhappy

because two men who were bound to have spent all their money in drink, somewhere or other, had selected her house as the one in which they determined to throw it away. At almost any other public-house—the *Red Dragon* for instance—they would have been turned out directly they had spent the last of their money ; and here she had fed them for nothing, telling Keziah to see they had plenty of good soup several times a day, and had allowed them a little drink to ease them off and steady their nerves. Of course, considering what they had spent, she could afford it ; but then that applied to other publicans, and as a rule they never thought of acting as she did.

With almost any other men her treatment of the case would have turned out all right. They would have gone away to look for work, and she would perhaps never have given them another thought until they reappeared a year or so later with more cheques to knock down. Like old Andy for instance ; he came at regular intervals, stayed until his money was spent and then, in the best of humours, disappeared. Of course it was disagreeable to have him about ; but it was impossible to make money very quickly with only moderate drinkers as customers.

It was all that horrible Tom's temper ; and if only Laurie had not heard him, she would not have minded so much. It was with Mrs. Johnstone, as with most of us who go on month after month, perhaps year after year committing meannesses and sins without ever admitting to ourselves that they are meannesses and sins, until one day, in the face of some one else, we see mirrored the recognition of the blackness and vileness of our guilt. Then afterwards, try as we may, we can never again quite lull ourselves into forgetfulness, as far at least as those particular sins are concerned.

She writhed afresh in spirit as she recalled the fearful epithets Tom had hurled at her, and the look she had caught in Laurie's face. In that look there was indignation, but there was also shame and suffering. Was he ashamed of her for taking money from such men, for

making gain out of their degradation? She wished she had not been persuaded to take the portmanteaux and clothes, for there seemed something more mean about that transaction than the monetary one; though she had said truly that Tom had worried her into it. But the cheques? Yes, she knew quite well that she had felt pleased when they were brought to her and had thought how they would swell her banking account; and one of them was Mark's—thirty pounds, saved since he left off drink.

Well, she said, recurring to her stock argument, if she had not taken it some one else would; and he was much better off without money, for now he would be forced to work. She had done a great deal for him, far more than most employers would think of.

She was saving more on Laurie's account than her own; and it would do more good in fitting him for a profession than it could ever have benefited those drunken wretches; for instead of money being good to them it was a curse. Yes, on the whole it would be better to keep on the business, only she must be more careful of the people she allowed to stay in the house, even if it did cause her gain to be less; for she did not want to see that look on Laurie's face again, nor be compelled to submit to the indignity of being spoken to by trooper Arnold as she had been that morning.

Hitherto she had managed to keep a good name as a publican; and it was only her anxiety about providing for Laurie's future that had made her relax her rules. There were plenty of publicans in Adelaide who would be only too glad of the opportunity of taking in Tom and submitting to hearing his foul language shouted all over the house, as long as it was not loud enough to bring the police about; considering it all in the way of business. Even the more aristocratic hotels, she said to herself with a bitter curl of her lip, were patronized by men who might be better dressed than Tom, and better educated, but who could, when drunk, rival him in vileness of tongue; and as a rule no one took any notice.

She had been sworn at hundreds of times before, and

though she hated bad language, yet it usually passed from her mind when the men passed from the bar. How was it then that she felt so worried? It must be she was growing old; and now she almost wished she had been trained, when young, for some other trade. With her ability and energy she felt she could have succeeded in other lines of business. It was too late now, she concluded with a sigh; and she must go on for a few more years.

When she got back Laurie had also returned. He replied listlessly to her inquiries after Mr. Cassels, and then went away to his own room with a book in his hand.

It was Saturday, and usually he found full employment for that day in the open air, either fishing or shooting, or cricket or football, or riding to the seaside or the hills; but the events of the past fortnight had rendered him low-spirited and even physically out of sorts. Mark's fall had been a fearful blow; for with the inexperience of youth Laurie had felt positive of the man's permanent reformation; and the signs of irritability and restlessness so significant to Mrs. Johnstone had been lost upon him. From the evening, more than a fortnight ago, that he had seen Mark lying on the sofa in his drunken sleep, the man had passed from one carouse to another, throwing away his money, not only in trying to satisfy his own frightful appetite, but also right and left among the loafers who invariably hang on to any drunkard who has coin in his pocket, and who can be got to stand treat.

Yesterday he had disappeared, and Laurie, on his return from school in the afternoon, had gone out and searched until bedtime but without avail; and he was filled with the gloomiest forebodings, remembering Mark's threat of self-destruction. His grandmother and Keziah had, however, scouted the idea, saying they had heard that sort of thing dozens of times before from men who were drunken, and but seldom anything came of it; and if a man wanted to commit suicide, he did not talk about it beforehand. Laurie tried to persuade his grandmother to send some one in search of Mark, and, if he were found,

to give him another chance ; but Mrs. Johnstone was firm in her refusal ; and so a good part of his morning had been spent in wandering along the banks of the Torrens, looking shrinkingly into the deep waters. He was lying on his bed not attempting to read when Keziah's voice called him.

“ Be ye ther, Laurie ? ”

“ Yes,” he answered, and she bade him come to dinner. He had the meal by himself in the little dining-room, Keziah waiting on him, and at the same time keeping an eye on “ Meram,” to whom she said she had been “ givin’ the lenth o’ me tongue ” for leaving a saucepan unwashed.

“ Wot be the use of frettin’ about that there wirthless Mark ? ” she asked, when she saw Laurie push aside his almost untasted dinner, “ yer hain’t eaten more’n keep a bird.

“ Don’t yer fret yer fat about ’e,” she went on, as he made no answer ; “ it bain’t no use, I tell ye. Wen a man once takes ter drink properly, nothin’ on this arth will mak’ ’e let go.”

“ Are you sure of that, Keziah ? Haven’t you ever known anybody who gave it up ? ” and Laurie looked at her earnestly.

“ Let us see,” said she, sitting down and folding her arms and shaking her head. “ Yes, I call ter min’ a man in Hengland as lef it hoff ; but ’e got right out of the sight and smell of it good, they said, ter a desert hisland in the sea, an’ stayed ther a matter of four years. An’ e warn’t much good, e’d give yer ’is larst five shilluns ; but yer’d ’ave ter look pretty sharp arterwards or e’d steal it from yer afore night. That be the honly ’un I ’ear tell of. Some on ’em ’as spells ’a times, for ’ears and ’ears, yer may say ; but ’em allus goes back ter it ; seems as if ’em can’t ’elp it, spessly if ’em is near the sight or smell on it. P’raps if ’em ’ad folks to stand by ’em and luk after ’em fer a year or two, ’un might ; but lor ! who’s a goin’ ter do that, folks hain’t time.”

Laurie shuddered. “ I at least will never touch it again,”

he said, leaving off the pretence of eating and leaning back in his chair.

“ Well, lad, I dunno but yer’re in the right o’ it. Yer can’t never come ter be a drunkard then, that’s sartin ; and I’m a good mine ter keep yer company meself. A lot o’ or church people is turrble sot against drink ; and I dunno but um be in the right, as I says just now. But as fer Mark, don’t yer trouble more about ’e, will yer now ? ” and she laid her hand coaxingly on his shoulder. Tak’ me word fer it ; ’e’s all right, and the best thing fer ’e to go on the tramp, ’e moight giv the drink a spell then, now ’e’s got no more brass.”

“ I can’t help troubling,” answered Laurie. “ It seems so horrible to think of him wandering about ill and wretched, without a penny.”

“ Yer worrittin’ and makkin’ yerself hill won’t do ’e no good ; and in the bush any one will give ’e a meal o’ victuels. Well, I must be hoff arter that Meram. She was that himperdent wen I axe ’er wy she lef the sossspan, that I ’ad to speak rash words ter ’er, and show ’er I wur boss. Ther ’uzzy, the dirt in the sossspan wur scarndlous ; and I’ll tell yer granma, that ’er or I goes if their haint a difference soon.”

Laurie went away and saddled his pony and rode about all the afternoon, searching ; but there was no sign of Mark. Weeks went by and months, but still Mark did not return, and no definite news came as to his whereabouts ; only a rumour that he had been seen with Tom and Harry going on the tramp.

CHAPTER VIII

FOREBODINGS

WE live in the little room of to-day whose furniture can be managed by us with more or less of ease. To-morrow's door is closed ; but sometimes we lean our burning brows against the panels, and pushing it the tiniest bit ajar, catch a glimpse of a vast and dim space where fearsome, awful shapes seem to abide. Then we begin to dread that we may be compelled to leave to-day's resting place, and dwell among to-morrow's shadows. But that fear is never realized ; the tiny room that is fitted for our small capacity continues to shelter, and happy are those rare natures which seek not to peer beyond its portals.

It is not so much the demands of actual life that drain our strength as what we deem the possible ones. True, we have to-day's bread, but what of to-morrow's ? True, our dear ones are safe beside us now, but will they be always there ? True, God has given us strength so far to accomplish the work He has set us, but can we count on that strength continuing ? We constantly try in thought to cross bridges before we come near them ; those that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred our feet will never touch.

Mrs. Cassels was endeavouring to peer into that awful shadowy beyond. Three months ago, the morning after Anne's birthday, she had been awakened by an unusual sound. Her husband was making a strange snoring noise, and she shook his arm, calling on him to awake, but found it impossible to arouse him. The attack was pronounced apoplexy, the patient bled until he regained

consciousness, and the doctor said he had had a very narrow escape.

His recovery was slow ; so slow that he had only been able to return to his employment within the past week. Something had gone wrong with his power of locomotion, and he could only get about by the aid of a stick. Either Hugh or Anne went with him to his business in the morning, and one of them was always ready to accompany him home at night.

His wife kept a cheerful face before her husband, but when she was alone, the anxiety and dread often broke her down. Few could or would have been so kind as Mr. Gollan was to his bookkeeper ; for he not only kept his situation open for him, but on every Saturday night brought the weekly wage that had not been earned.

In spite of this there had been the greatest difficulty in making ends meet. The doctor had advised a month at the seaside, and as Mr. Cassels could not go alone, Hugh went with him, and board and lodging for the two made a great hole in the weekly income. Shocks from an electric battery were ordered, and tonics and port wine were said to be necessities ; all cost a good deal of money. Mrs. Johnstone often sent a bottle of the latter, and would have liked to do so more frequently, but was afraid of wounding the proud susceptibilities of people whom she thought, in spite of their kindness to Laurie, reserved and cold.

Hugh had gone this night with Laurie to a school entertainment, and Anne had been sent to meet her father. Jessie had a sleepy fit, and went early to bed, and the baby was in his cradle, asleep also.

“What was to become of them ?” the wife and mother thought ; and the tears dropped from her eyes upon the sock she was darning. “Mr. Gollan could not go on for ever, paying a salary that had not been earned. If her husband became a confirmed invalid, as her foreboding heart told her all too truly would happen, the task of supporting him and the children would fall on her, and how was she to

do it? On one thing she was resolved, to maintain their independence, and never sink into pauperism.

"She had no relatives, and it was doubtful whether her husband's people would have the will to assist them in making a start. In any case, even if she wrote at once, it would take six or seven months before an answer could be received. Something must be done soon, but what? She did not know, she could only pray that a way might be opened up, and that she might not break down; that," she repeated to herself passionately, "must not happen. 'Be anxious for nothing,' she whispered to herself, as her fingers flew to and fro, 'but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God, with thanksgiving.'

"'Thanksgiving'—how hard that seemed. Troubles always loom larger than blessings, and it is natural for the soul to cry out to God for help in its extremity, but to give thanks at the same time for mercies already received!

"Paul, when he penned that exhortation, knew what it was to suffer from hunger, thirst and all kinds of miseries, and still he could mingle thanksgiving with his supplications for help. But then," and she glanced at the cradle near her feet and listened to Jessie's soft breathing, "he had no children, and knew nothing of what it was to be anxious about their daily bread. One could suffer one's self; but Andrew and the children?

"Still," she mused, as she finished one sock and took up another, "among those to whom Paul wrote there were husbands and wives and children, and they were poor; worse still, often went about in danger of their lives; and Paul was of too loving and sympathetic a nature not to think of this. Yes, she would remember and be thankful for the blessings given her: for the much love which had been her portion, for the many happy days that were past; and if the future mapped out for them was to be dark, the clouds must be needed for some wise purpose, and she would trust and hope."

And so, being a woman who from childhood had felt

strongly the spiritual forces that are incorporated with our daily life, the old words comforted and strengthened her, as they had comforted and strengthened millions before.

Oh, ye doubting Thomases ! think well before you try to break the staff on which so many fainting souls have leaned. If you cannot think that every night is followed by morning brightness, at least do not strive to take away the hope of those who look for the day. Faith in the spiritual means a force far above any other known, to enable the sinful and suffering to struggle through whirling tempests and seas of blackness ; to make for poor toiling humanity the rough places plain and the crooked paths straight ; and woe to the man who incurs the curse falling on those who cause one of these weak ones to stumble.

It was not yet seven, the time of closing the warehouse, when Anne peeped in at the open door of the caretaker's cottage. The whole of the front and side of the dwelling was covered by an immense vine, now beautiful in its summer dress, and Anne looked upward at the long tendrils that clasped hands above the doorway, the soft air swinging them to and fro. She noted the pencilled lines of the young leaves, transparent in the sunlight ; the delicate veining, she thought, would be good copy for her drawing-book ; and she sniffed up the sweet smell of grape blossoms which, together with the little berries already formed, gave promise of a plenteous harvest of big purple grapes. Then she walked round the yard and inspected some large flower-pots set against the wall, and lingered especially over an old barrel, painted green, in which grew a huge fuchsia, one mass of scarlet and white blossoms.

As no one seemed about she sat down on the door-step to watch the pigeons that were cooing and tumbling, and flying up and down, from the dove-cot. There were about fifty of them, pouters and tumblers and commoner kinds. One big brown fellow, his feathers shining and glistening like satin, riveted her attention. He was always so very

busy and important, up and down, in and out, bowing and scraping, rating his patient wife for leaving the nest a minute to stretch her cramped legs and wings, and murmuring patronizing approval when she obeyed his orders to hurry back again.

Then she saw there was a new pair out, balancing awkwardly on the ledges and waiting for their parents to fly up and give them their supper. She loved the long-beaked, soft-looking young ones best ; they were not so self-assertive as those of older growth, and she always felt as if she would like to catch and cuddle them to her breast ; they looked so scared and astonished at the strange world into which they had fallen. But she disliked the way the parents fed them, and was always much relieved when they had learned to eat on their own account.

Voices came to her from the packing-shed the other side of a high wall.

"That old Marshall seems a rum old cove, from what I've heard since I came here a fortnight ago. An atheist, ain't he ?"

"Not to say exactly an atheist, I think. He goes to church sometimes ; but nowhere regular, and doesn't care if it's a Wesleyan Methodist, a Roman Catholic or a Jews' place, so long as he can hear a man that has got something practical to say, and don't go in for beating at the wind, that's what I've heard him say. Most of his Sundays he goes walking out to the hills, or down to the sea-beach, says he sees more of God in nature than in heaps of the sermons the parsons preach. The way lots of 'em hobnob with their Maker, and set themselves up above ordinary working-men, and do nothing to make folks better citizens, shows they are round pegs in square holes, he says."

"Um ! he won't take a friendly beer either. I asked him one day to come and have a wet, didn't much care to be seen with him, for of course he's only the caretaker, and that old coat of his looks awfully green and shiny ; but, bless you, he wouldn't come ; said something about he didn't take intoxicating drink, and it would be better

for a young man like me both in health and pocket to pay fewer visits to the public-house. Cheek, wasn't it?"

There was a laugh. "That's like him, awfully downright he is. You didn't know he was a teetotaller?"

"No, is he though? Oh! I see, a bit cranky, that accounts for it."

"No, not to say cranky; only a bit queer. Don't eat meat either, only vegetables and things that grow."

"Yer don't mean it; why, he must be worse than cranky—downright mad."

"No, I tell you he's sharp enough, and so you'll find if the work ain't done to suit him. In fact, he's tremendously clever, reads books that you and me wouldn't know what the words meant."

"If you have to go without your glass of beer, and eat grass and thistles to make you clever, I don't want to be clever."

"Don't worry, sonny. There ain't the least danger of your brains busting up your head, or you'd manage this packing better than you're doing at present. You can take those parcels outside now."

Anne had fallen into a reverie, wondering what sort of a "me" the brown pigeon had, and where it would go after it died, when quick steps pattered round the corner and a pretty little middle-aged lady became visible. She wore on the fair hair which was turning grey at the temples a white lace cap, and over her cotton dress a black satin apron with pockets.

"You there, dear?" stooping and kissing Anne. Her voice had a pleasant Scotch burr. "Your papa will not be long; and I know you would rather sit out here than go inside, you are such a gipsy. Always wanting to be out in the fresh air and sunshine, and it is all very good for you too. I was just going to feed the pigeons; but you can do it for me if you like, and I will get my chair and sew."

Anne was delighted, for she had been hoping the birds had not been given their evening meal; so she went to

where the bin stood, and came out with a scoopful of wheat. As she scattered there was a rushing of wings, and a calling to each other to come to supper from the messieurs and mesdames pigeons, and then a great deal of pecking and gobbling, all of which was intensely interesting to their servitor. Meanwhile the little lady was sitting in her cane rocking-chair, her attention divided between Anne, her feathered pets, and some linen frills she had taken from one of her apron pockets together with a silver thimble and reel of cotton.

"My frilled pillow-slips are wearing out, so I am making some more. Ah! you naughty lassie, you do not like sewing. Well, perhaps when you are older you may. I am not sure that I liked it when I was a little girl; but later on I found sewing a great blessing. Many a trouble women stitch into their work and leave there."

She turned down the narrow hem with a meditative air. "When we first came here, I used to contrast these bare high walls with our pretty Scotch home, and think of our old garden, all one mass of bloom. Oh dear! how my spirits would go down. But I kept busy, and whenever there was a minute to spare, out would come my needle and cotton, and in making some new thing my trouble flew away. Then I got the pot plants, and watching them and the vine was a great pleasure; the vine had not long been planted when we came."

"Didn't you want to go back to Scotland?" inquired Anne.

"Indeed I did if it had been possible; but I never told Mr. Marshall. We could not go back, so it was of no use grumbling, and after a time we got used to the new life, and John always has his books; he brought out a good many, and he buys a new one every now and then. After all, it does not take much to keep two old folks," and she smiled with sweet content.

"Mr. Cassels is a little late to-night, my dear. I am afraid he will be tired. He had a rest on the couch after dinner, and a dish of tea with us."

"Kind, dear? Who would not be kind to him? He is so thoughtful and considerate himself, very different from many of the employés. Why, some of them show plainly that they look down on Mr. Marshall and on me also; of course it is only their ignorance; they don't know enough to see that John is no common man, and that a housekeeper may be a lady. But your father is different, dear. It is a great thing for you to be the daughter of a gentleman."

Anne's face glowed with pride at hearing her father's praise.

"Here he is," she said, jumping up as Mr. Cassels came round the corner, leaning on the arm of a tall rugged-featured man who was carrying a bunch of keys. Anne went and stood by her father, so that he could remove his hand from Mr. Marshall's arm to hers.

"Ah, poor man!" said Mrs. Marshall when they had gone, shaking her head slowly as she stood looking after them. "It is dreadful to see him."

"Yes," said her husband. "I do not think there is any improvement; in fact, he seems to walk with more difficulty every day."

"That is just what I think, John, and yet he seemed so hopeful this afternoon when he came in for a rest. I darkened the room and he went to sleep for half an hour; then, while he drank his tea, he chatted so cheerfully. I wonder if it is that he will not allow himself to realize what may be."

"Perhaps so. If it ends in a total breakdown, as seems probable, what will become of them? That little girl is a bright little creature, with a wonderful voice for so young a child, and Cassels has formed great plans for her training; it will wellnigh break his heart should they have to be given up."

"There might be worse than that," remarked his wife with a deep-drawn sigh; there would be the finding food and clothes for them all."

"It is a sad sorrowful world, a sad, sad world."

"Yes, John, but don't forget that it is a happy one too ; we must not forget that. Much sadness and sorrow in it, but much joy and happiness also. Is it not happiness to watch the pigeons wheeling and swinging against the blue sky, and to look at the green leaves and smell my mignonette and carnations ? And presently shall we not have a pleasant evening together, you with your books and I with my sewing."

"Yes," he answered without moving. "Truly it is much for which to be thankful ; though I cannot forget that our evenings now might have been very different, if I had not been such an ass as to fall a prey to sharpeners. Then, too, I often remember that we are growing old, and that the years left for us to be together are quickly lessening. How few those past seem looking back ; only yesterday that we were driving away from the church porch in the bright morning, and now the shadows fall."

"Nonsense, John," she answered brightly. "We may both live another twenty or thirty years ; and even if we do not, it does not matter ; we must just make the best use of those we have, and look forward to the lease of new life on the other side. At least you believe that is probable."

"Yes," he said slowly. "The existence of a great First Cause. I cannot see any way of getting out of that proposition. To imagine that all this wondrous universe came by chance, seems a thought fit only for madmen. The histories of past nations clearly demonstrate a purpose tending towards the conservation of good ; and given a Creator who set it in motion, strongly suggests that He has made us immortal. It is strange this longing for immortality among all races of men, both civilized and barbarous ; and it would be a hideous thing were it never gratified. Men ever holding up hands of entreaty to a nonentity, or worse still a demon. David, for instance, with his passionate sin-laden soul, crying out, 'As the heart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God !' and then never finding anything higher than himself. An education of sixty, seventy or

eighty years to eliminate the baseness, and foster the growth of what is noble in us, and then to end in nothing. We cannot know. But what we call death may be merely a change of state. Meanwhile the sadness of the present weighs one down. It is well for me to have a wife like you, Bessie—one who always looks on the bright side—or life would, I think, have become unbearable.”

“And well for me,” she echoed, smiling, “that I have a husband who does not forget others’ sorrows when he is happy himself, or perhaps I might have become too selfish: satisfied when life went easily with ourselves, and forgetting those who suffer.” Her face was close to the shabby coat-sleeve and unseen her lips touched it.

“It is good that we are both pleased, my wee wife,” and he pressed to his side the hand that rested on his arm; and just then the serving-maid rang the tea-bell and they went in together. He placed her chair, and bore himself at the tea-table with a courtly grace that would have surprised some of the young shopmen who considered very much beneath them “old Marshall,” the caretaker and outside boss, who superintended the sweeping and dusting of the warehouse, and locked up after they had departed, and whose wife assisted in preparing the meals provided for them.

After tea, Mr. Marshall established himself in his easy-chair with a formidable tome in front of him; and his wife in her rocker, with the newspaper, from which she occasionally read bits aloud. As he was rather deaf and apt to become absorbed in whatever occupation he was engaged, to the exclusion of all else, his wife’s selections often seemed to him rather mixed.

“Fancy, John! the Duke of Saxe-Coburg is selling a lot of his old wine. Not very dignified.”

“Oh! what did you say, my dear?”

“The Duke of Saxe-Coburg is selling a lot of his old wines. It is in the English news that came yesterday.”

"Yes, I know the mail-boat came in yesterday. What about it, Bessie?"

"The Duke of Saxe-Coburg is selling his old wines. I did not say anything about the mail-boat."

"Bless me! you don't mean it; selling his old wives! Just listen to this, Bessie. Plato says that 'justice, reason, virtue, etc., are not material entities; and that the soul to which these qualities belong must therefore be immaterial.' No one can contradict that proposition. I never noticed it before."

Mrs. Marshall, with a good-humoured sigh, gave up the attempt to instruct her husband in the batch of English news and set herself, needlework in hand, to listen to the profound thoughts of the grand old Greek, and to understand as much of them as she could. Ever since they were first married, her husband had been trying to kindle in her mind enthusiasm like his own, in matters philosophic; but it must be confessed with scant success.

The couple had once possessed a comfortable income and a home that had belonged to Mr. Marshall's family for generations. But evil times fell on them through the collapse of a bank and disastrous speculation, and the old place had to be given up.

The colonization of South Australia had greatly interested Mr. Marshall, and thither he determined to emigrate. Immediately after landing he had accepted the position of outside manager and caretaker to Gollan & Co., for he had received no training that would fit him for active business on his own account. After a time Mrs. Marshall became housekeeper, and both husband and wife, like sensible people, adapted themselves to their new environment; and Mrs. Marshall's bright, cheerful disposition made the best of things.

Anne and her father proceeded homewards almost in silence, for Mr. Cassels was very tired, and he was obliged to watch his feet carefully as he walked; there was a numbness about them that made them drag and often stumble.

Anne thought of what Mrs. Marshall said about two old people needing little, and that they were very happy. The child's intensely sympathetic nature drew out the confidence of others, so that even grown-up people often found themselves talking to her as to an equal in age.

How could people be content when such dreadful changes came? To be shut up between high brick walls, in a little four-roomed cottage, instead of living in a charming old house set in a beautiful garden, and surrounded by broad fields and lovely lanes, through which Mr. Marshall used to drive his fat ponies. There was her father too, how sad and disappointed his life had been. She could remember from the time that she was a tiny toddling little thing, how he used to take her on his knee, and tell her of his boyhood's home in the beautiful island of Maderia and of his resolution, when he had money enough, to go back and live there again.

As they were crossing North Terrace, the Governor's carriage drove by, followed by a couple of mounted troopers, picturesque in their pale blue and silver uniform, their accoutrements flashing and clashing. The red-coated soldiers on guard at the gate saluted, and the carriage rolled through the gateway. Anne's eyes followed the carriage until its back disappeared in the winding drive. Ah! if only they had a carriage and a big house, and a coachman and footman in gold lace and buttons, how delightful it would be. She hoped the time would not be long before her father's fortune was made, for of course there was no doubt he would make it in the end; and she was going to earn money herself. Very likely she would be a great singer, or a famous painter, or she might invent something. That laughing-jack now, flying heavily from bough to bough of yonder tree, could do something that people had not learned. If birds, who had very little sense, could fly, surely people could find out the way. Yes, she would learn to fly, and astonish everybody, besides making heaps and heaps of money; for she could charge

those she taught, and they would also pay to see her fly above the tree where the jack was sitting ; and she would fly up towards the stars that were beginning to twinkle—up—up——

A stone in the pathway made her stumble and nearly fall, and her father rather irritably bade her look where she was going, for she had almost thrown him down. So poor little Anne found, like many another of us, that it is easier to dream of flying upward towards the stars, than to walk firmly in the prosaic path of duty.

CHAPTER IX

LEAVING THE WHITE COTTAGE

THERE was a wedding in the Friends' Meeting-house, and Jessie, who had of late been left much to her own devices, followed the party of silver-grey dresses and broad-brimmed drab hats. Quiet as a little mouse, she sat in a corner of the building, and witnessed how the young Quaker and Quakeress took each other for better, for worse. Then directly the assembly began to break up, she stole outside and ran back to the garden, peeping between the fence palings as bride and bridegroom, accompanied by their relatives and friends, walked joyously but decorously in couples, arm in arm, down the lane.

It was February ; there had been no rain for weeks and what grass remained on the Parklands was brown and parched. The trees were dust covered, the Torrens trickled as a rivulet so narrow in places that Jessie could step over it, and the pools along its course daily grew more shallow. In the early morning the lords of the vineyard had been bringing in from the hill slopes for Saturday's market, wagon and cart loads of grapes, white, black, red, purple. At the white cottage garden the vines were heavy with fruit ; there was a fig-tree laden with long brown Syrian figs, and next door to it yellow plums almost ready to be gathered, while from one tiny tree hung fragrant downy globes that mortals called peaches. To these same round temptations, peeping at her between green leaves, sauntered Jessie, and stood looking, looking and longing. Then with outstretched finger she went round the tree, counting them ; the first crop that had been

borne. There were, as she knew by heart, seven peaches—one for father, one for mother, one for Hugh, one for Anne, one for Jessie, one for baby and one over; and they were to have them soon. The sun was hot and she was thirsty; she wished she could have hers now. Gingerly she drew nearer, and smelt the peach on the nearest bough; it was just level with her nose, and the smell was, oh, lovely! She put out the tip of her finger and touched it, so soft and velvety. She touched again, then of a sudden, plucked. There was a sound of gobbling, a fearful glancing round to see if any one was looking, and the peach had disappeared. There was a spot of juice on her pinafore, and she took out her handkerchief and wiped it off carefully, then threw the stone she was holding in her little hot hand over the fence, and next, trotting to the kitchen door, called out “Anne.”

Her sister, leading their toddling little brother, came at her call.

“Come here, Anne,” and she went toward the wood-heap.

“Why? What do you want, Jessie?”

The culprit turned round and, putting her flushed face close to her sister’s, whispered, “I tole a peach, and ate it.”

“Stole a peach,” repeated Anne, with a scared look.

“Yes,” pointing to the tree. “Don’t tell, will you?”

“You must tell yourself. What made you do such a naughty thing?”

“I dunno.” And she put her finger in her mouth and began to cry.

“It’s no use crying,” said Anne sternly; “come and tell mother.”

But Jessie stoutly refused, and was adamant to both coaxing and scolding.

“Very well,” said Anne at last, “if you won’t tell, then I must.”

Jessie frowned and turned away as Hugh came running out.

"Come on, girls, and see me gather the peaches. Mother says I can, they are ripe enough."

Anne followed him silently, but Jessie walked round the wood-pile and vanished.

Hugh gathered one after the other, looking at each, smelling and commenting on its beauties before laying it in the basket among the vine leaves he had placed there. Presently he looked puzzled, stopped and counted those in the basket, then looked all over the tree again before saying excitedly—

"Why there's been a thief here and stole one of our peaches! There have always been seven, and they were all there first thing this morning, and now there are only six."

"Only six," repeated Anne mechanically.

"Yes, count for yourself. Well, of all the mean wretches, to come and take one of our peaches when we had only seven. I wish I could catch the wretch, I'd give him a good hiding. It must be one of those cottage-row boys; one of the Browns or O'Connors, most likely. I'll flip their ears when I see them."

Not stopping to hear his sister's feeble remark that she was sure it was none of the row children, Hugh ran off to tell his father of the catastrophe. But Mr. Cassels did not coincide with his hasty conclusion, and after inquiry he said, when the three stood before him—

"Children, seven peaches were on the tree early this morning, for your mother counted them. There are no marks of strange footsteps about, and I don't see how it would be possible for any one to have come into the garden without being seen; for some of us have been in and out all the morning. If whoever took the peach will confess and tell the truth, I will not say another word about it, except that I am sorry it occurred; but if a lie is told, I shall punish it severely, when I find out the culprit."

He glanced doubtfully from one to the other, but neither spoke.

"I am going to ask each one separately. Did you take it, Hugh?"

"No, father, of course not."

"Did you, Anne?"

"No, father," but her voice faltered.

"Did you, Jessie?"

"No, father," said Jessie, her blue eyes upraised, without the slightest sign of blenching.

He looked at each in turn: Hugh, puzzled and angry; Anne, crimson and pale alternately; Jessie, calm and unconcerned. Then he sighed deeply, turned from them and took up a book. The children lingered a moment and then went outside.

When Anne got Jessie by herself again, she tried to persuade her to confess; but it was of no use, the child stubbornly refused, but showed no resentment when her sister said that in that case she must herself inform her father, for otherwise Hugh would not be free from suspicion, and her strong sense of justice told her that she had no right to allow that to continue, even if she were willing to bear it herself.

So by and by there was, under the trees across the road, a sobbing child burying her face in Anne's lap, and the other's tears falling on the culprit's head, while Hugh stood by fulminating against sneaks who stole and told lies like Ananias and Sapphira, and who might be struck dead like they were.

"Do be quiet, Hugh," said Anne; "father has punished her and that is enough."

"He nearly broke my back," sobbed Jessie.

"What stuff," said Hugh. "He scarcely touched you, not half as much as you deserve, little sneak, letting father think we did it. Prigging the peach wasn't so bad; but telling lies! Ugh! And then you ate the other after dinner, and I was going to ask father to give the one over to Laurie. You're a bright beauty you are," and he strolled off with his hands in his pockets.

"What is my little sweetheart crying about?" said a

gay voice ; and she was caught up by a pair of strong young arms that belonged to Louise Mitchell's big brother, lately promoted from school to a desk at his father's office. He had been home to luncheon, and was returning through the Parklands, when he espied the sisters sitting under the fence.

"What is the matter ? " he said again, kissing Jessie's tear-stained cheeks and wiping her eyes with his handkerchief. Anne silently got up from the ground, not answering his inquiries. Jessie, however, had no such reticence.

"Tole a peach off the tree, and got whipped for it, and will have to sit by yourself at brekfus and dinner and tea for a week ? " he repeated. "Poor mite ! Hard times ! "

"It was not that," interposed Anne hastily.

"An' I telled Anne, an' Anne telled of me," piped Jessie.

"Did she ? That was too bad. Never mind, little sweetheart, here is some toffee in my pocket, and I will give you plenty of peaches off our tree to-morrow ; but I must be off now," and he set her down and kissed her, not looking at Anne.

"You told another story, you wicked child. You know quite well it was for telling a lie that father punished you."

"You don't mind how my head aches," said Jessie, wrinkling her forehead.

Anne went miserably home. All the world seemed awry. Jessie telling lies, Will Mitchell looking contemptuously at her, her father so ill that he was obliged to give up his situation ; and in a week's time they must all leave the dear white cottage, and go into an ugly house where there was no garden, and where they would have to keep a little shop and sell groceries and fruit and vegetables, and pens and ink and paper. She knew all about it, for during the past fortnight she had often accompanied her father to the different stores where he sought to lay out judiciously the forty pounds that Gollan & Co., together with some other business friends, had insisted on making up ; for Mr. Cassels had invariably gained the respect and esteem of all with whom he came in contact, and great

was the commiseration felt among them for the misfortune that had befallen him.

Mrs. Cassels was in the kitchen, pouring melted fat into a candle mould, where, at the top, thin sticks held the wicks in place.

"Where is Jessie?" she said, looking up.

"In the yard, mother; she said she would sit there and play with her doll."

"You must run out now and then and see she is all right. Go and take up baby, dear; he has been crying, but I had to finish these.

Anne fetched the baby, and sat down on a box.

"Will you make candles when you have the shop, mother?"

"No. It is a saving now, but I shall have too much to do; besides, we shall buy them at wholesale price."

Anne thoughtfully scanned her mother's face. There were lines there that had not been visible a few month's before. The child's mind could only enter vaguely into the woman's cares and anxieties, yet she understood enough to make her heart yearn and her eyes fill.

"How will you be able to mind the shop, mother, and do everything else?"

"God fits the back to the burden, my child, and I shall depend a great deal on your help. Your father will keep the accounts, and he can sit in the little room behind the shop, and let me know when I am wanted. We must all do our best, and remember what I have already told you and Hugh. Never lose your independence. Never sink to hanging on to others for help. Help yourselves and God will help you."

"It seems cruel of God to let father be so ill. I wonder why He does."

"It is strange; but God knows best, and sees the end from the beginning, which we cannot. When we say 'Thy will be done,' we must try and mean it, not only utter it with our lips. Somehow we shall manage, and in a few years you children will all be a great assistance."

"Oh, mother, if I only could. But Hugh says girls never can earn much money. I don't see why they can't; anyhow I shall try. But then if I don't go to school," she went on in a dispirited tone, "I shall never learn to do much."

Mrs. Cassels looked sadly at her. "What one learns at school is only part of education, and, if you try, the way will be opened. You can have some lessons in the evening with your father, and the most important lesson of all is to learn to do one's duty: the duty that lies nearest your hand. As I cannot get on without your assistance, it is very plain that your duty lies here just now. Do that well, and then something more pleasant than minding your little brother and sister, and washing dishes and sweeping floors, may follow."

"I love minding Walter—he is such a darling, with eyes just like yours, mother—and I will try to like the other things." And Anne hugged close the little fellow, resolving to try and like washing saucepans and sweeping floors; or at any rate not to let her mother see how she hated such work.

And behind the closed door in the next room Mr. Cassels was fighting again a bitter contest against the utter despair that had come upon him with the knowledge that never again would he walk upright with free step among his fellowmen. That instead of being the bread-winner and sustenance of wife and children, he must, for all the months and years that remained to him, sit with folded hands and see his weak wife and young children struggle to earn, not only their own daily bread, but his also.

"O God!" he groaned, "let me die, do not sentence me to continue in this living death, I pray Thee; let me go hence," and big scalding difficult tears, such as men shed only when their hearts are wrung by direst anguish, fell from his eyes. "What have I done to be singled out for punishment; and not only me, but these others through me." Then his thoughts went back to past days, to his boyhood's home in beautiful Madeira.

There was the blue of the sea and the steep slanting sides of the island, up which they used to ride on mule back, his little sister swinging in a pannier. There was the abbess of the mountain convent, his mother's friend; with the sweet-faced nuns, who gave them tiny candied melons, or oranges, or cherries. There was their own house with the great garden filled with flowers that bloomed all the year round. There was the broad verandah covered with climbing plants, under which he and his father and brothers and little sister all sat in the evenings among the palms, and listened to the rippling music that came from his mother's fingers through the open French windows. Sometimes she sang to them in low, sweet tones. Ah! that last Sunday night, he remembered it so distinctly, when she sang with a break in her voice.

Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross that raises me.

He was a boy of fourteen about to be sent to England to school, and now he felt again the painful thrill those words gave him. He shrank from being raised higher by means of a cross, and resolved that he would never sing those lines.

But what availed his shrinking? The suffering came thick and fast. He never saw his father after the day they parted on board the ship that took the schoolboy from his birthplace. His mother only came to England, to die a few months after her husband's death, and the brother and sister were separated. He had not been allowed to fulfil his young ambitions. His business had been a failure, and his health soon broken. And, now, was his wife to spend her life in menial toil? Were his children to grow up uneducated, and to sink lower and lower in the social scale?

Why was it? Why should he be singled out for punishment, when he had at least always striven to do his duty, and others who set the laws of God and man at defiance allowed to prosper? If he could only die quickly, it

would not be so bad ; but the doctors said he might live many years. How awful ! Many years of lying like a log, useless and worse than useless. It almost seemed as if there could be no just God, after all ; and if he were sure of that he would destroy himself.

But the momentary darkness of horror passed. " No ! no ! a thousand times no. God does rule justly, and though He slay me yet will I trust in Him," he murmured with pale lips. " I must be a coward to harbour the thought of suicide even for a moment. What ! because I suffer, I must refuse to bear the burden and throw far worse suffering on my wife, and leave to my children the dreadful heritage of knowing they had a suicide father. God forgive me. Life is short for the happiest, and even for the miserable it lasts but for a brief space. Surely I can bear patiently what thousands of better men than I have borne manfully. This suffering is sent to render me in some way more fit for work in the coming life ; for there are lessons to be learnt that only suffering can teach. I will do my best to learn. Only God help me ! God help us all ! "

When Mrs. Cassels was able to leave her work and go to him, she found him more resigned than he had been since all hope of recovery was lost.

" My poor wife," he said, as she smoothed his hair with her trembling fingers. " I will try to bear it patiently, and not add to your heavy burden by my peevishness and complaints. God alone knows how we will get through it all. This trouble to-day about Jessie worried me terribly. It seemed as if it might be a foretaste of the future, now that you will not be able to exercise so watchful a care over the children as heretofore."

" But she is such a baby yet, dear."

" Yes, I know. But at the same time it seemed in my jaundiced state of mind as if she were becoming a full-blown criminal. Poor little thing. I am afraid I was too harsh with her."

" No, Andrew, you were not. Lying is a vice that should

be stamped out early if possible. She is certainly not so truthful as Hugh and Anne, and the affair has troubled me too very much. However," she added in a more cheerful tone, "we must do our best. What we cannot accomplish, God will do for us in His own good time!"

"You are a brave patient woman, Emily. I am ashamed of myself when I see your courage. But there is no doubt women, as a rule, have far more patience and fortitude than men."

CHAPTER X

ECONOMICS

"PASS me the awl, Jessie. I must make another hole ; and I do hope the leather will hold ; it is rather rotten."

Jessie watched anxiously, while Anne sewed together, with waxed thread, the sole and upper that had broken away from each other.

"There now, it looks almost as well as if the old shoemaker had done it."

"There's a little bit broken showing through."

"Oh ! that is nothing ; you must not stick out your feet. It's a pity we can't wear long dresses like mother."

"I don't see how I can keep my feet stuck in when my frock is so short. I wouldn't care, only for the Mitchells."

"Bother the Mitchells."

"You wouldn't like any one calling after you 'old patches,' like Jim Mitchell did the other day."

"Horrid little beast ; but don't take any notice. It's only his ignorance," said Anne loftily. "Of course we have been taught better ; but Mrs. Mitchell is only a common sort of woman."

"It's just as nasty, if it is ignorance."

"Ig-no-rance. Anyhow my boots are far worse than yours ; they are coming out at the toes, and I don't keep grumbling." She took up one as she spoke, and dangled it thoughtfully in front of her. "I do wish I could put on toe pieces."

"Why don't you ask the old shoemaker to show you ?"

"Oh ! I wouldn't like. I watched how he did the sewing that day I had to wait ; but putting on toe pieces must

take a long time, and I could not stay so long without his wondering. It's lucky I saw him sew; he would have charged ninepence or a shilling for these, and they will do to wear on weekdays."

"And the awl and other stuff only cost sixpence?"

"Yes, and then you see the awl might last for years; and the thread and wax might do for ever so many other boots."

"Yes, the shopman, who laughed and asked if you were going to start business, gave you a good lot, didn't he?"

Anne reddened. "It was very rude of him. If you are poor, people seem to think they can say what they like to you."

She put on her boot and began rolling up her thread on a stick.

"You had better put yours on too, Jessie, and your stockings; for you must mind Walter while I go and cut the lucerne. The butcher said he would be here by five o'clock for it. He is going to pay sixpence a row, and there are fourteen of them, so that would be almost enough to buy a pair of boots for one of us."

"What did you say you are going to do with our hats?"

"I read the other day of a new way of cleaning them, and I am going to dye the ribbon."

"Dye it, what is that?"

"Make it another colour. You know those little snow-drop bulbs that we used to make red paint of. Well, Katherine Muir showed me some ribbon she had dyed quite a pretty pale pink from them; and I am going to try and do ours."

"Pale pink. Oh, that will be lovely!"

"We must gather the eggs presently; they are two shillings a dozen now, that is a help; and we shall soon have some fowls fat enough to sell."

"Wouldn't it be nice if we could have a few more eggs to eat? It's horrid to have such a little money. I wish those gold diggers would come along that father used to tell us of, driving about the streets in a coach with four

horses and white satin rosettes on the horses' heads, and throwing money to the people as they passed; and going into the shops to buy bonnets for their wives, paying five-pound notes, and saying they didn't want any change. Oh, how I wish they'd come and throw me a note!"

"Jessie, for shame. You ought to have more pride. The idea of taking money from anybody; and above all from vulgar people like that," and Anne turned up her nose scornfully.

She took down a small sickle that was hanging in the shed in which the cobbling operations had taken place, and walked towards where the purple lucerne flowers filled the air with sweetest odour. Jessie and Walter followed, the former carrying her boots and stockings in one hand. A sound of wheels made them look round in time to see a handsome pair of horses drawing an open landau pass swiftly up the street.

"There's the Governor's carriage," said Jessie. "I s'pose he can have just as many boots as he likes."

"Of course. Oh dear! If father had kept well, we might have had a carriage sometime, or a buggy at any rate."

"Well, if we can't have a buggy, I wish mother would let us go without boots like the O'Connors and Browns. In the yard and paddock, I mean," she added hastily. "Of course I don't want to go outside without."

"We can't go about like those common children. Both our grandfathers were rich if we are poor."

"What's the good of having rich grandfathers if they're dead and we haven't got any of their money? I'd rather be a common child and go without boots, when there's a patch on one and a hole in the other that my stocking shows through."

Anne did not answer, but proceeded to cut the lucerne, and then taking some pieces of string from her pocket, tied it into two bundles. Jessie was playing hide and seek with Walter, and Anne called out to them to stay there while she took the lucerne indoors. Carrying the

bundles in her arms, she walked round the house to go in at the shop door. To her amazement there stood the Governor's carriage drawn up in front, and half a dozen children gathered on the pavement, looking with awe at the equipage, and the coachman and footman magnificent in gold lace and buttons.

"Hooroo! the Gov'nor's goned in to buy his butter," said one of the O'Connel boys.

"Them Cassels 'ull be more dirty proud than hever," said the little Brown girl; but she shrank back among the group as Anne, overhearing, looked round at her.

There was a strange voice in the little sitting-room, and Mrs. Cassels, who was finishing serving a customer, bade Anne wait until she was disengaged, then told her that a famous preacher—the Rev. Thomas Binney—who was travelling through the Colonies, and who knew the Cassels family at home, had called.

A tall man, sandy-haired, and with a remarkably high broad forehead, was talking to her father.

"Your eldest daughter?" he said, taking her hand, and she, though dreadfully conscious of her patched frock and ancient boots, held her head high and looked at him fearlessly. He fixed his clear penetrating blue eyes on hers, then turned to her father.

"Yes, she is wonderfully like your aunt—just the same clear-cut features, and dark-brown eyes. I wish Miss Cassels could see her."

Anne listened during the next half-hour as in a dream, while he chatted to her parents, telling how Miss Cassels had let her London house for two years while she travelled on the Continent; that her brother had lately given up the active management of the mercantile firm, of which he was the head, to his eldest son; that a second son was a coffee planter in India; and another had lately been ordained a Congregational minister. How different it all was to their life, she thought, keeping a little shop and mending old boots!

But before he left he made her heart beat high with pride

as he spoke of this grand land of Australia ; cut loose from the narrow traditions and worn-out customs that were the bane of European peoples. The land of glorious opportunities, both civil and religious, and where the spirit of toleration was strongly developing. As an instance of this latter, he mentioned that the Anglican Bishop of Adelaide had written to him, expressing his great regret that the law of his Church forbade his inviting Mr. Binney to preach for the Anglicans in their pulpits.

Then he spoke of the beautiful scenery around Adelaide. "I went for a long day's drive yesterday in those glorious hills of yours ; and though I have travelled all through Italy and Switzerland, I have seen nothing more lovely."

"Well, friends," he said at last, looking, at his watch, "I must hurry away, for I am almost due elsewhere. When I return to England I shall see Mr. and Miss Cassels, and shall let them know how you are situated. May God help you both to bear your heavy burdens."

He shook hands warmly and departed, leaving more hope in their hearts than had been there for many a day ; for the past two years had been terrible ones for the family. Mr. Cassels had grown steadily worse, until now he could not walk across the room without assistance. Mrs. Cassels still managed to attend to the multifarious duties that fell to her lot, though only God and her own heart knew what the strain had been. The profits of the little store but sufficed to keep them in barest necessities, while clothes and household goods had gone on steadily wearing out, and could only be replaced most scantily. The letter despatched to England had remained unanswered ; so help from that quarter had been despaired of long ago. Now, from what Mr. Binney said, it seemed possible that Miss Cassels had never received it. He had been greatly concerned to hear from Mr. Gollan that relatives of the richest people in his congregation were in such poor circumstances ; and, unsolicited, had promised to use his influence on their behalf with both uncle and aunt.

Mr. Gollan had told him that it was only the greatest

extremity which had forced the Cassels to receive assistance at first ; and on account of their stiff independence, it was difficult to help them. Should, however, their own relatives offer it, the matter would, of course, stand on a different footing.

Mr. Binney's reputation as an eloquent and learned Congregational clergyman was world-wide, and when he arrived in the Colony the hospitality of Government House had been offered to him, and so led to the astounding apparition of the vice-regal carriage standing in front of the Cassels' little shop.

As soon as he departed Anne rushed away to Jessie and found her sitting on the fence beside Walter, looking at the water carter filling their water butt. The carter had an immense wooden barrel, mounted lengthwise on wheels, and he used to drive the old brown horse which drew the conveyance into the Torrens ; then let down a rope with a bucket attached and, standing on the shaft, pull up the vessel full of water and pour it into the square hole at the top of the barrel. At the back was fixed a long leathern pipe which, when not in use, was hooked up to the top, but now at the present moment was let down into the butt. The children on the fence were watching with absorbed attention the not too clean stream rushing from its leather conduit, and with which their tea would presently be made, unless Hugh or Anne went and brought a bucket from Katherine Muir's well.

"Go and ask mother for a shilling to pay Mr. Leake," called Jessie.

"Get down from the fence at once, Jessie." Anne went up close to her and whispered indignantly, "You are showing all your legs."

The contrast between the Government House carriage and Jessie's bare legs filled her with mortification.

Jessie unwillingly scrambled down and Anne lifted Walter. When the carter had departed Anne turned on Jessie, who was sitting on the ground, slowly putting on her stockings.

"You looked just like one of the Browns or O'Connors up on the fence, such a sight. It would have been a nice thing if you had come indoors like that."

"Oh! bother! you were up on the fence yourself yesterday; and you know very well I wouldn't come round to the front."

"You were running about like that before Mr. Leake; and if you had known that a gentleman had called to see father in the Governor's carriage, you would have been sure to come round and show yourself."

"I wouldn't; but there wasn't, was there?"

Anne nodded importantly.

"Oh! why didn't you call me to see the carriage?" asked Jessie excitedly.

"Likely! when I knew the sight you were. Anyhow, I could not; he only stayed a little time and I forgot all about you. He knows father's people at home."

"Well, he might have taken us for a ride; it wasn't much good just coming and looking at you."

"Jessie, you are a horrid little thing. I think it was awfully kind of him to take the trouble. He is a great preacher, and he knows Aunt Anne and Uncle James, and he will be sure to tell them about us."

"Well, I hope they will send father some money. If the preacher man noticed your boots, he might send you a pair."

"He wouldn't be so insulting; you do say the most disgraceful things. Hasn't mother told us over and over again never to take presents. You know very well the Cassels can't take things from people as if they were common beggars," and Anne drew up her small figure and looked scornfully at her utilitarian sister.

"I don't see anything 'graceful in taking boots if you want them. I expek he'll forget all about telling Aunt Anne yours were out at the toes, and then she won't send us any money. What was the good of your having her ugly name, if she never sends anything?" said Jessie, quoting a remark of Hugh's.

"Don't talk like that, Jessie. Father was fond of Aunt Anne, that is why I am named after her."

"Well, Hugh says she ought to give us some of her money, when father gave you her name, and I've heard you say yourself it was ugly and you wished you were named Kate or something pretty."

When Hugh came home he was at once told of the wonderful visitor. For some months he had been office boy at Gollan & Co.'s but he was just as averse to office work as he had formerly been to study, and was always longing for an outdoor life. The three children sat, as they usually did in the evenings, in the kitchen. A carpet made of wheat-bags sewn together made comfortable that part of the floor where the table stood; one end of the latter was covered by a cloth on which Hugh's tea was spread, and the girls sat at the other: Anne with a French grammar before her, Jessie with an exercise book.

"I don't believe it's any good asking that old cat of an Aunt Anne. If she was going to do anything for us she would long ago," said Hugh, with his mouth full.

"Any one at home?" and Laurie put his head in at the door. "Here is a bucket of water just out of the well, nice and cool. Katherine Muir told me you had not been for it."

Anne jumped up. "You are good, Laurie. I forgot it this afternoon, and Hugh has only just come home."

"I wish you would leave it for me every afternoon, it is too heavy for you to drag along."

"Come in, come in," called Hugh. "I suppose you have heard the great news?"

"That the Governor's carriage was standing at your door for ever so long? Is there any one within a mile who has not?" and Laurie threw out his arms dramatically. "Yes, Keziah was full of it when I got home. There are all sorts of stories afloat. What does it mean?"

All three tried to tell him at once; and Laurie was as much interested as they, for he had become as one of the family, and entered deeply into its cares and anxieties.

It often chafed him sorely to be compelled to use the comforts and luxuries with which his grandmother surrounded him, while those he loved lacked so many things. At first he had tried on several occasions to get Mrs. Cassels to allow him to spend his pocket money in providing various small articles for the family use ; but she had put her veto on it so decidedly, even sternly, that he soon plainly perceived further persistence would mean the severance of the affectionate relations that had grown up between them. Hugh and Anne had both assimilated the strong sense of independence that characterized both their parents, and it was only to Jessie, very occasionally, that he ventured a small gift. "The poorer the Cassels became, the prouder they grew," he sometimes said irritably to his grandmother.

"I think you will find something come of it," he said thoughtfully. "I have read about Mr. Binney in the papers, and am sure he is the wrong sort of man to let it end in smoke."

"He can't make father's people help," said Hugh.

"No, but he is one of those men who influence nearly everybody with whom they come in contact ; and I am certain he will use his power to some purpose in this case. The funniest stories are flying round. Keziah has heard that the Governor had received a letter by the English mail telling him you had come into a fortune, and so that he sent for you all to go and stay at Government House until you were ready to start for home."

"Much chance of that," remarked Anne, laughing. "Meanwhile, until they do send for us you, and I, Jessie, had better get on with our work."

"Shall I help you with your exercise, Anne ? I have brought you a little French story ; we have just done it in class."

"The cover looks very new," she remarked suspiciously.

Laurie laughed. "You are the funniest people. It isn't new though, but it did not take long to get over. I ought to have smudged it a little just to satisfy you."

"You needn't laugh. We wouldn't mind taking things

from you if we could give things back ; but we can't, and we must preserve our independence."

"We are poor," chimed in Hugh ; "but we don't want to be beggars too."

"All right," said Laurie testily, "I've heard that a few dozen times before. But I do think you make a fad of your independence."

"It's nearly all we have," said Anne, "so we cling to it."

"I'd let Laurie give me a new pair of boots in a minute if I could," interposed Jessie.

"You think of nothing but boots," exclaimed Anne vexedly. "You had better go on with your exercise, for it is time you were in bed."

Laurie and Anne bent over the French book, and Jessie scratched away in hers. Presently she asked—

"Where do you put capital letters, Hugh ?"

"Oh, sling 'em in after a fullstop. I say, as soon as I am old enough I shall go to the diggings, and find a big nugget. There was a man found one the other day he couldn't lift ; I saw it in the papers."

"I hope you will," answered Jessie. "What is a harbour bar ?"

"A place where they sell drinks, a course," and Hugh winked at Anne, as she looked up.

"Don't Hugh. She will get her exercise wrong, and it will give father more trouble to correct."

"He wouldn't make the fuss old Young did when I gave him that answer. My word, he did cut up ! And the other time when he asked me the meaning of the thing at the top of my copybook—'Temper the tongue'—and I said without thinking, 'Pound it up for sausages.' Golly ! you should have seen the old boy's face !" and Hugh put down his knife and fork to indulge his merriment at the recollection, while the others also joined in.

When the mirth had subsided Anne made remark : "I should think he would be cross, it was so stupid ; and you never will stop to think."

"Think be blowed. I don't see but any one might think it meant a bullock's tongue; and I'd watched 'em being pounded up at the butcher's."

"How much does one and nine and one and sixpence make Hugh? questioned Jessie, who was doing a sum on her slate.

"About three and three."

"But 'about' won't do. Father wants to know zackly how much."

"Well, zackly, three shillings and threepence. I say, Anne, do you think the next time the Governor will come himself, and buy one of your drawings? Then he could send it home to the Queen, and she might make you "Lady Anne Cassels.'"

Anne curled her lip at him, but ignored his further teasing. She hid her ambitious dreams as much as possible, but strive as we may to conceal our real selves, we cannot help them sometimes peeping through the windows of their prison-house. And Hugh had begun dimly and somewhat contemptuously to comprehend that there were forces in his sister's nature utterly different from his own.

CHAPTER XI

ANNE TAKES A SITUATION

THE months dragged wearily on, and Mrs. Cassels was almost at her wits' end to know how to manage without getting into debt. She hid her worst difficulties from her husband as much as possible and enjoined the children to do the same. They lived on the barest fare, and though daily bread had always been given it was often dry bread, without the dripping at which once the children grumbled but now they looked on as a luxury. The question of how to provide clothes was an ever more pressing one, and boots had become a sort of nightmare to her. If things went on much longer at the present rate, they must either starve or accept assistance from the friends who proffered it. One alternative seemed almost as bad as the other to the woman who had hitherto struggled successfully to retain her independence.

She just managed to plod on hour by hour, and her days were so full that small part of them was given to dwelling on her cares. But at night, when the rest of the household were locked in slumber, she used to lie awake, hearing the little Dutch clock strike hour after hour; till at length exhausted nature claimed its due, and heavy sleep held her enchained until it was time to arise and again take up the daily burden.

The thought ever latent in her mind, even when she was most absorbed in a thousand petty cares, that a conscious Presence watched with omnipotent power over her and hers, alone held her up. The firm conviction that all must be well in the end with the children of the kingdom

to which she belonged, and that the present suffering must undoubtedly work out issues for good, constantly sustained her.

Mr. Cassels managed to give Anne and Jessie occasional lessons, but often for weeks together it was impossible, and the thought of Anne's hunger for knowledge being left unsatisfied added one of the most poignant pangs to his sufferings. He seldom mourned aloud over what could not be helped, and the effort to appear cheerful often made him so in reality. For it is a fact that the face we show to the world is reflected back to us, and the reflection either inspires or dispirits, according to the expression we have set in motion.

Hugh was growing more and more dissatisfied. Being chained to an office desk was even worse, he said, than sitting behind a school one; and he longed for a free open-air existence, such as some of his schoolfellows were leading on farms or stations. The idea of running away to seek his fortune often presented itself to him; but love for his parents and Laurie's influence had so far held him back. The dominant note in his being was objective, and he was not cast in the mould that can patiently wait for the future good that must be bought by self-denial.

Anne was developing on other lines. About the time of the removal to the shop a Congregational church was founded in North Adelaide, and the Cassels joined it. Mr. Cassels had never felt thoroughly at home with the Anglican ritual, so dear to his wife's heart. For him the repetition of the same invocations and prayers tended to degenerate into mere form; while to her it was not only associated with her childhood's impressions, but was also in consonance with her cast of mind. Knowing, however, the great pleasure it gave her husband to attend the simpler service whenever he was able, and being also herself powerfully attracted by the eloquent preacher who came from England to assume charge of the newly formed congregation, she was quite willing to acquiesce in the change.

It meant much to Anne, for the preacher, young himself,

possessed a magnetic force, an intellectual power, that specially attracted the young. His interest in science, philosophy and art, and his frequent allusions to them in his sermons, presented religion under a new aspect, and exercised a tremendous influence over her. While Hugh yawned she would follow as keenly as did her parents every word of the fine discourses that held enchained the rapt attention of crowded audiences.

She carried about in her mind a whole world of interest to which her brother was a stranger. The crumbs of knowledge which she managed to pick up were a joy of joys to her. The hours spent in the open air, wandering about the Parklands minding her little brother and sister, ministered to her intense love of nature, and helped to cultivate her powers of observation. Often, while Jessie and Walter played together, she would lie silent on the grass and watch the tiny ant people, hurrying and jostling, backward and forward among the forest of stems that overshadowed them, bringing home material and sustenance for their storehouses. Bees, heavy with the yellow pollen they had been rifling from the dark crimson or creamy-white gum blossoms, buzzed fearlessly near her head. The silver eye sat still in her nest when Anne craned her neck to peer through the green boughs. For her the magpies and parrots gurgled and chatted and screeched overhead. For her the snow-white clouds mysteriously appeared and disappeared, drifted and marched in great battalions far up in the blue ether. The spring which welled in crystal fountain from the brown earth, and the river chattering past the stepping-stones, filled her with wonder as to their beginnings and endings. The everlasting hills smiled or frowned at her in sun and storm. The moon gazed solemnly back at the earnest eyes that longed to know of her secrets; and the million flashing worlds that wheeled in the infinity of space drew upwards to them her throbbing heart.

So Nature talked to her child and taught her many things, for the great mother returns a million-fold whatever love we lavish upon her.

She seldom went out for a walk without taking a book, and read and reread and brooded over the few volumes that were in the house, so that their contents were assimilated and more gained from them than often happens to the possessors of full libraries.

The Bible she had read from the beginning to end, several times, by means of the daily chapter that had formed part of the training given her by her mother, the large portion committed to memory, and her Sunday-school and Church lessons. This alone was the means of enlarging her horizon of thought, in a manner those not instructed in the Great Book cannot conceive. The paramount note of duty sounded throughout ; the insight into old religions ; the histories of ancient civilizations ; the glimpses of the beginnings of art and science ; the laying bare the springs of thought that animated the reformers and lawgivers, the warriors and the poets, the deliverers and saviours of mankind ; the recorded words of men who have influenced all the centuries since they lived and wrote on the highest of all themes, and whose influence is an ever-increasing force, all helped to prepare the soil for the seed of altruism, and minister to its growth.

The beautiful moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, the poetic fervour of the Psalms, the exquisite imagery found in Isaiah and Revelation, at this time in her life impressed her most. And being a thoroughly pure-minded child to whom the suggestion of anything gross was abhorrent, the reading of the old Mosaic statutes of law, and the records of certain parts of the lives of the patriarchs, left nothing that stained her innocence. For the magnet of the uncorrupted mind draws towards itself only what has an affinity and rejects what has not ; either evil is not noticed or it is not comprehended.

The same result obtained in the reading of several Shakesperian plays which fell into her hands ; the undesirable part slipped through the net of her mind ; but the wit, the philosophy, the portrayal of noble character attracted and assisted in the moulding of her being.

There were some school prizes belonging to her father over which she pored : a history of Greece, a life of Socrates, Longfellow's poems, a magazine containing short life sketches of most of the famous Italian painters. The latter volume exercised the strongest fascination over her ; and long years afterwards, she could never hear the names of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Fra Angelico, Giotto, Tintoretto, and others of that great company, without feeling anew the same old thrill.

There were two heavy dilapidated encyclopedias which had been bought at a sale of waste paper. When she felt the need of something fresh in the way of mental pabulum, she would fall back on these ancient volumes, and gleaned from them quite a store of out-of-the-way bits of knowledge.

Drawing and painting still occupied many a spare hour, but she was getting discouraged at her progress, and continually longed for the instruction of the great art schools of Europe. But Europe was out of reach, and equally out of reach the poor instruction obtainable in the Colony ; for the high fees charged were prohibitive to people of the Cassels' means. The same applied to her singing ; and in this her father was no longer able to give her help, for his voice had almost gone. But the church and Sunday-school music were always a delight, and when the organ rolled, and she joined with the choir in the volume of sound, it called up visions of the crystal sea mingled with fire, the golden streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the thunders of those who sang together as the sound of many waters.

The winter was setting in early, and Mr. Cassels, through not being able to take exercise, felt the cold acutely. His wife looked at their thin blankets and small wood-pile with a sinking heart, and the ever-present clothes difficulty loomed still larger. Hugh and Anne, and even Jessie, were out in the early daylight gathering bark and sticks from the Parklands, and hunting for the mushrooms that formed a welcome variation in their diet. Mrs. Cassels found that young nettle tops made an excellent dish of

boiled vegetables, and soursabs, as the children called the oxalis that grew wild in the neighbourhood, were, when stewed with sugar, quite relishable.

The lines in her now care-worn face seemed cut deeper than usual when one evening she stepped into the room shared by Anne and Jessie. The latter was asleep, but the former was sitting in front of the dressing-table, the white cover of which was thrown back. A number of her drawings with pink paper pasted round the edges adorned the walls, and two deal shelves, threaded on cords, hung there also and contained her library. A saucer held a light she had herself concocted out of melted fat, and a dried stamen from a grass plant stuck in the middle. With her left hand she held an open book close to the light.

The dressing-table consisted of a wide deal plank supported at each end by two boxes, and on the plank Anne had inked the representation of the keyboard of a piano. This she was fingering with her right hand, and looking so intently at her book that for a moment she did not notice her mother standing behind her. Mrs. Cassels put her arm round the bending neck and her lips to the dark head.

"Oh, mother! you did give me a start. See, I can play this line quite well, and I have puzzled out the difference between tones and semi-tones. Look how I can play this bit," and Anne moved her fingers slowly from key to key, or rather their inked representation, humming the air the while.

"You are getting on beautifully, dear; how I wish you had a piano."

"So do I and I will some day. Then when we do get one I shall be able to rattle off all sorts of things in double quick time," and she laughed joyously, elated by what she had succeeded in doing that evening.

For several months she had been trying to learn from a little manual on the theory of music, that had belonged to her mother.

"Put it by for to-night, Anne, I want to talk to you."

"Yes mother," said she obediently, closing the book and pulling down the white cover over her keyboard. "What is worrying you now? Sugar, I suppose?" with a sigh. "The sugar is always getting done, and no profit on it. It dries up so, and when we weigh it out there is nearly always a loss. People seem always coming for sugar, and nothing else; don't they, mother dear?"

"Very often, dear. But Mrs. Mitchell had two pounds of tea also, so that is a help; for we get ninepence a pound on the tea, and it is very seldom we sell two pounds at a time."

"Oh! she was here again, was she? Bothering you about her servants, I suppose?" and Anne lifted her chin, and wrinkled up her nose in disgust.

"Yes, she drove here from Glenelg, where they are staying, on purpose to see me. She obtained a cook and housemaid from the emigrant ship that came in last week, but she has not been able to get a nursemaid, and now she wants you to go to her."

"Me? Wants me to go? Her nursemaid! A servant?" cried Anne starting up.

"No, dear. She asks you to go as nursery governess. The four little ones are all under six, so of course there cannot be much teaching required. It is evident the principal work would be looking after the children, mending their clothes, taking them for walks, and some light housework. She would pay you twenty-eight shillings a month," finished Mrs. Cassels falteringly. She did not think it necessary to tell Anne that Mrs. Mitchell had remarked on her own excessive liberality in offering the same wages she gave to a nursemaid.

"I should hate to go," said Anne slowly; "but twenty-eight shillings a month!" and she paused, then after a minute went on again: "We want money so badly; it would almost pay the rent, and then there would be one less to feed."

"Yes." The mother looked wistfully at her child's clouded face. "If it were not that we are getting driven

into a corner, I would not have considered the proposal for a moment. But we have not been able to hear of anything else that would be better, or even equal to this. If you went into a shop, you would only get about five shillings a week, and no board. Dressmaking apprentices are expected to give six months of their time for nothing, and we cannot hear of any opening as a pupil teacher. Should you desire to accept Mrs. Mitchell's offer though, you must be prepared to do the work of a nursemaid. I am convinced she is merely changing the name to induce you to consent."

"No matter, I will go," and Anne looked at her mother resolutely. There seemed nothing strange to either of them in leaving the decision to her, she had grown of late so purposeful and decided. "It is not the work I mind a bit; that would be only what I am doing at home. But, oh, mother! to have to leave you all!" and she broke down sobbing.

Presently she drew herself from her mother's clinging arms. "Never mind, mother; it is quite time I started to earn my living, and Jessie will be able to help you. Perhaps something better will turn up by and by."

"You shall not go unless of your own free will, dear."

"My will cannot be altogether free, mother, or Mrs. Mitchell would never get me. But the money, the money, we want it so badly. Yes, I will go. I must."

"Then, Anne, you will have to tell your father yourself and reconcile him to the project. I have not had the heart to say anything to him about it, and don't feel as if I could do so now. But you will need to control your feelings, or he will never consent to your going."

"I shall be able to do that to-morrow. Never fear for me, there will be no red eyes or noses about then," replied Anne, with an attempt at gaiety that made her mother's tears flow afresh.

So it came to pass that a week later Anne was rattling along in the omnibus that travelled the seven miles between Adelaide and the Glenelg sea. Mr. Cassels' opposition

had been difficult to overcome, but his little daughter had shown a self-control and resolution that astonished her mother, and almost made her father think that she felt pleasure in taking the situation.

"Very well," he groaned at last. "I am such a useless log myself, that I have no right to prevent your going if you wish it, but I never thought my daughter would have to leave home in order to become a nursemaid, for that is what it means."

"But, father, it is only the same sort of work that I do now; and perhaps it will lead to something better, and seven shillings a week will be such a help."

"Yes, child, I know all that. The money would be an assistance; but it is dreadful to have to let you go, and among such associations, for I do not care for the family. But if it must be it must; it is only another bitter drop in the cup."

Then she had soothed his despondency and coaxed and persuaded, and even at parting had borne herself so bravely, that Hugh and Jessie envied her the rambles on the beach, the sea bathing, the collecting shells and seaweed of which she chattered. Only her mother was not deceived; she knew the aching heart and shrinking spirit with which her child looked forward, and at times it seemed impossible to let her go; but the whip of necessity drove and allowed of no turning back.

Laurie had been away from home for a holiday, and returned to hear from Keziah, who always knew everybody's business, that Anne was departing that afternoon. He rushed off at once, but was only in time to put his head in at the omnibus window, and shake hands when the horses started, and he had to jump back hurriedly out of the way of the wheels.

He turned homewards in a very indignant frame of mind: raging at fate for making such a step necessary, almost angry with Anne's parents for letting her go, and feeling inclined to cuff Hugh, who had got leave for an hour to help his sister to carry her box into town. For

Hugh had begun, until cut short by the exasperated Laurie, to wish that he too, like Anne, could get away and have some fun. "Going to that old cat of a Mrs. Mitchell was better than always being kept scratching at a desk day after day."

Anne got out at the terminus, and the driver handed down her box from the roof of the coach, she being the last passenger. She looked round to see if any one had come to meet her, but nobody was in sight; and as soon as the coach had been driven into the stable-yard, she took up her box by the cord fastened round it, and struggled along the heavy sand in the direction the driver had pointed out.

When the crest of the line of sandhills in front of her was reached, she sat down on her box to regain her breath. For a moment she looked at the blue vastness that in solemn majesty lay stretched to the encircling horizon, then hid her face in her hands. The unnatural strain she had put upon herself during the past week suddenly gave way, and presently she slipped down and lay with her cheek on a low grey bush, in an agony that almost choked her. Like a tide came the overmastering awful sense of loneliness that fills the sensitive young soul when for the first time it is cut off from the embracing love that has guarded and guided it since first it drew the breath of life.

It was quite an hour before she sat up and tried to dry her tear-drenched face. Though the sun shone brightly the wind had risen and chilled her to the bone, and her eyes smarted and ached. But the outburst had been a relief, and as she smoothed her hair and brushed the sand from her dress, the salt breath of the sea, of which she now became conscious, revived her spirit, and the sight of the dancing waves roused youth's unfailing hope and energy.

"How glad I am they cannot see me," she thought, turning her head wistfully in the direction of the home she had left. "It is a good thing it happened before I got to the Mitchells'."

"Try babby, try babby," she murmured mockingly, her mouth curving into a smile as she remembered once seeing little Walter, herself unseen. He was looking for her to take a thorn from his finger, and while the big tears kept trickling down his face he repeated to himself, over and over again reprovingly, with a catch in his voice, "Try babby, try babby."

But warned by the moisture that rose again to her own eyes that it was not safe to look back, she hastily jumped up and seized her box. Her destination was only about half a mile further on; and soon she was knocking at the front door, her arms aching and her heart throbbing nervously. A tall, freckled, angular young woman, with an immense quantity of flaming red hair, opened it, and in answer to Anne's inquiry said—

"Mrs. Mitchell is hout, likewise all the family for a picnic. The new gal, I presoom? Yer ought to 'ave gone round to the back."

"I am the nursery governess," said Anne with dignity.

"Ho! Hindeed! Nussry govness, is that wot yer is called? Nussmaid the last was. But I don't mind, I'm sure. Bring yer box in, and I'll show yer where to put it in the nussry."

Anne did as she was bid, but with swelling heart. She found that the "nussry" was a small untidy-looking room, into which was crowded two bedsteads and three cots; and that she was expected to sleep there with the owner of the cockney accent and the three youngest children. From the opposite door, which led into the kitchen, stepped across the narrow passage a fresh-coloured young Irish-woman, who was introduced as "Miss O'Leary, the cook." My name is Miss Shanks," said the red-haired girl; but you can call me Hemma and cook Bridget. Wot is yer name?"

"Anne Cassels," she replied shortly.

"Hann, I presoom then is the title you will go by; the last one was Jemima, and she only stayed a week. I couldn't abide 'er. She was so huppish. We was just agoin' to make a cup of tea wen you come, fer we'd just cleaned our-

sels after doin' a day's wash. By the time you 'as yer things hoff, it will be ready."

Without answering Anne sat down on the bed that had been pointed out as allotted to her use, and whose grubby-coloured counterpane looked so uninviting. In a stunned sort of way she tried to understand the position. She had expected to do nursemaid's work, but not to be placed on the level of a servant, and be compelled to endure the familiarities of the cook and the housemaid. She felt inclined to take up her box and walk out of the house, but remembered there was no coach until the morning, and an eight-mile walk, carrying her box, was out of the question. Then, was she to give up seven shillings a week because she found things more disagreeable than she expected? No, she could not disappoint those at home; she must and would earn the money they needed so badly. Her mouth set resolutely, and she took off her hat and jacket, hung them on a nail behind the door, uncorded her box, bathed her face, and seeing that her hair was full of sand, set herself to brush it out.

CHAPTER XII

OPENING A SCHOOL

FOR six months Anne stayed with the Mitchells. Her work, she found, was really that of a nursemaid, and under some circumstances she would not have disliked it, but her life was often rendered very miserable by the slipshod management of Mrs. Mitchell and by the compulsory association with the vulgar, coarse-minded, spiteful Emma. There was always a free supply of brewery beer for the servants' table, and Anne knew when Emma had been taking more of it than usual, for then she became doubly quarrelsome and insulting. Walter and Louise were always kind, but the first was not often at home, and the latter was extremely delicate; and the doses of porter and wine that her mother, by the doctor's orders, insisted on her drinking, seemed to do her no good. She had no energy, so that Anne found little companionship there, and altogether was very lonely.

But a welcome change came when Emma was at last dismissed for drunkenness and dishonesty. Her successor was for some time an enigma to Anne, for though a most capable and excellent housemaid she was evidently well educated and well bred. Soon a warm friendship sprang up between the two, though the Puritan sensibilities of the younger were at first rather startled when she learned that her new friend was a Roman Catholic, and it was some time before she could be brought to fully realize that it was possible for one brought up in the ancient faith to be broad-minded and tolerant.

At the end of six months, Mrs. Cassels was taken ill, and Anne was sent for. The night before she left, Mrs. Hall,

for that was the housemaid's name, confided to her the circumstances which had led to her present, apparently incongruous, position. She was a young childless widow with a small income, and being greatly interested in philanthropic work among women, and convinced that domestic service under proper conditions offered an immense field of work for them, had set herself to obtain practical knowledge as to the disabilities under which mistresses and domestics worked. For this purpose she had travelled through America and the Colonies, and had taken several situations herself, so as to be able to speak from first hand knowledge. Better education, proper training, a day service as well as those living altogether in the house, graded certificates of competency and raising of the social status were what was needed to place these home assistants on a satisfactory footing.

The two parted with regret, and Mrs. Hall promised to see Anne before she left for England which would be in a short time. On arrival home she found a wonderful event had happened that morning. By the English mail had come a letter from Aunt Anne, enclosing a cheque for £30, and intimating that annually a similar amount would be forwarded as long as they required assistance. The letter was couched in cold, formal terms, and saddened Mr. Cassels, but his wife was deeply thankful for the help, and felt that the worst part of their struggle with poverty was over.

Mrs. Cassels' illness was rather serious. Worry and overwork had for a long time been sapping her health, and a crisis was reached, when one evening Hugh did not return home, but instead, a note arrived which told that he had run away and shipped as cabin boy on an outward bound barque, that would be absent quite a year. As soon as Mrs. Cassels was well enough to go, she went to the Nortons at the Summit for some weeks, Anne and Jessie managing to keep things going during her absence. The rest and change to the pure hill air worked wonders, and the children declared when she returned that their mother

had grown quite pretty, and her husband looked wistfully at the face to which some of its lost youth seemed to have returned.

Anne began to think what would be her next step, for go back to the Mitchells she would not. "Mother," she said one day, about a week after Mrs. Cassels had resumed her ordinary routine, "I am nearly fifteen, and father's ship that he used to talk about has not come yet. I am a good mind not to wait any longer, but to set up a school," and with a little laugh, she looked inquiringly at her mother.

"If you were two or three years older you might, but as it is——"

"But I mean just for very little children. The little Mitchells got on well with me, and I used to help the older ones with their home lessons. Mrs. Hall said I had a knack of teaching."

"I am afraid, dear, you are too much of a child; besides, where would you get pupils?"

"I would go round about and ask people, and I think Mrs. Mitchell would send me Bob and Charlie and Dot when they come back to the Terrace."

Mrs. Cassels still looked dubious.

"Do let me try, mother. There is Hugh's room not being used now. Jessie and I could have that for a bedroom, and make ours, which is larger, into a schoolroom. I should want two or three forms and a desk; they could be made out of those planks in the shed that have been lying there ever since we came. Our landlord can't want them, or he would not have left them there all this time. Any how, I could ask him."

"You seem to have been thinking it over."

"Yes, for ever so long. If I got a dozen pupils at ninepence or a shilling a week—that is what is charged at the little schools—I could soon pay for the forms and desks, and in time I might get twenty, that would be as many as we could squeeze in! Oh! mother do let me try."

Mrs. Cassels smiled doubtingly at the excited little

face. "We might talk it over with your father and see what he says."

"Yes, let us have a conference," and she enthusiastically kissed her mother and went capering round the room ; then stopped with hands tightly clasped. "Let us go and tell father now and get it settled before we begin our bag-pasting this evening. Laurie is coming to help, and we can tell him then. I am sure we can persuade father."

Her confidence was justified, and to her unbounded joy the school plan decided on.

Bag-pasting was a new source of income. The firm from which they bought their groceries supplied paper bags, ready cut out, but which needed pasting together at the side and one end. For doing this latter they were paid at the rate of ninepence per thousand.

In the evening, all the family assembled round the kitchen table, on which stood a pot of paste and a huge pile of paper bags, Laurie and Anne were pasting, Mrs. Cassels and Jessie, armed with clothes were wiping and smoothing ; little Walter fetching and carrying, while Mr. Cassels from his arm-chair, in the intervals of conversation, read aloud from the daily paper.

"I will help you, mother, while you is doing busy," said Walter, picking up a cloth which she had dropped.

"Darling," she murmured, stopping to kiss him.

"Another thousand," announced Laurie. "Ninepence more," writing the number on a slip of paper beside him. "At this rate, Anne, we shall soon earn enough to pay for the forms and desks."

"Yes, if we could only get a constant supply. Mother has got some tea chest lead, and I am to have the money for that when the old tin-smith buys it."

"I am going to make the dunce's cap," cried Jessie.

"Take care you don't have to wear it," commented Laurie with a grin, while he carefully turned down the end of another bag. "I am going to whitewash the school-room, and mount those loose maps from Hugh's atlas on calico ; so that they will do to hang on the walls. With

a thin stick gummed on the bottom and another on the top to keep them taut, and coloured paper pasted round the edges for a frame, they will look quite grand."

The mention of Hugh's name brought a shade over the father's and mother's faces; and their eyes sought each other in mute understanding. Anne, not too absorbed in her own joy to notice, said with a laugh—

"I am going to let out the tucks of my best dress, and wear it when I go round seeing the people." Her eyes shone like stars, and her cheeks were crimson.

"Why? Do you think it will look better?" asked Laurie.

"Look better," she repeated scornfully, tossing her hair out of her eyes. "I want to look old. Old, do you hear? It will nearly reach the ground when the tucks are taken out; and I shall look about eighteen when my hair is turned up."

At this everybody laughed, and when Walter asked, as he brought her a parcel of bags, "Let me sarpen the slate pencils for your sool," permission was graciously acceded.

"You have not given your mother or me anything to do yet," said Mr. Cassels. "What is to be our rôle in the performance?"

"You and mother will be patron and patroness, and bankers; and take care of all the money I earn." And she went round the table to give his arm a squeeze.

"Dear old girl," he said below his breath. Her brush had left a dab of paste on his cheek; and he wiped it off with laughing comment, and blew his nose rather loudly; then picked up the paper from his knee.

"I wonder who 'Blue Flax' may be! In the notices to correspondents he or she is informed "Your poem, though not without merit, is scarcely up to our standard. There is also a word misspelt. We give the best stanza. With perseverance and care you may be better. Try again."

Anne had stopped pasting, "What is the verse, father?"

He read—

“Old trinkets fondly treasured up,
Old letters sere and worn ;
Leaves of a season long gone by,
Voices from far off borne.”

“ I think it is very pretty,” said Laurie. “ The editor might have given us the rest.”

“ But fancy people writing poetry and making mistakes in spelling ! ” and Jessie, who had found out that she was a born speller, looked contemptuous.

“ I can fancy that Will Shakespeare or Milton might sometimes have misspelt a word, and yet their poetry be none the worse for it. Perhaps the editor of the paper is a speller like you, Jessie, and very particular.” And Laurie smiled at Anne, for he thought she looked annoyed, and he knew she occasionally could leave out or put in a letter too much ; but she did not answer his glance, instead seeming engrossed by her pasting.

“ Blue Flax is not the first by a good many who has suffered the mortification of rejection,” commented Mr. Cassels. “ Many of our most famous writers found it at first difficult to gain attention. Think of Milton with his *Paradise Lost*, only able to get fifteen pounds in all for it, though to be sure he gained immortal fame.”

“ Leaves of a season long gone by,
Voices from far off borne,”

repeated Mrs. Cassels, dabbing her bag slowly, “ That expresses just what I have often felt when looking over yellow old letters of three generations past, and my few trinkets.”

“ What will you tell the children to call you ? ” asked Jessie, interrupting the debate on Blue Flax.

Her sister paused with uplifted brush. “ Oh ! dear, I never thought of that. I suppose it would not do to let them call me Anne, would it, father ? ”

“ We must promote you to Miss Cassels, I suppose. Miss Cassels who looks eighteen will make us feel rather old,

mother dear, will she not ? ” and he smiled half playfully, half sadly—“ How the children are growing up ! ”

He took the paper up again. “ Some one signing himself ‘ T. M. ’ is writing a warning about the four sparrows that were brought from England and set loose the other day. He says that sparrows were introduced into America, and have become a terrible pest there, and have already cost thousand of pounds in the ineffectual attempt to exterminate them. Rabbits, too, he says, are being treated as vermin ; they have increased tremendously, and are damaging the pastures.”

“ To write so about four little sparrows is ridiculous,” commented Mrs. Cassels. “ Most likely the poor little things have been eaten by cats before this. I only wish we could see a few of the funny perky little mites about ; it would remind us of home, and perhaps they would keep the blight that is such a nuisance, off the cabbages and cauliflowers, and help to destroy the grasshoppers.”

“ It would be jolly to have wild rabbits here,” said Laurie. “ Zeke could shoot one for dinner now and then instead of his ‘ parrits ’ as he calls them, and we could get some to tame.”

“ I love rabbits,” said Anne. “ Our white ones with the pink eyes that we had at the Terrace were such sweet little dears. I forgot to tell you all that Louise Mitchell says her father is getting some snails sent from England. Do you remember, mother, how you used to tell us long ago of the little fellow who carried his house about on his back, and how we used to wish to see one.”

“ Wouldn’t it be nice,” exclaimed Jessie excitedly, “ if we could get one or two ; we could keep them in a box with our silk-worms, and feed them on cabbages.”

Laurie made a note of the wish, and determined to gratify it, if possible. He summed up the opinion of all. “ T. M.” must be a silly old noodle to imagine four poor, harmless little sparrows could do any injury to the great continent of Australia. Surely there is plenty of room for them and a few rabbits as well. The rabbit nuisance in America

must be grossly exaggerated. Fancy thousands of pounds spent to kill rabbits! Absurd!"

Laurie had a carpenter acquaintance who made the forms and desks cheaply from the planks which the landlord cheerfully presented to Anne, saying that they were of no use to him.

Before the week was over, they were arranged in the freshly whitewashed schoolroom, and the maps hung in position. Books, slates, pens and pencils could be bought at the store and the schoolmistress provided the ink. Then she began to canvas all the likely houses in the neighbourhood, and on the opening Monday seven pupils presented themselves. "A lucky number," she said joyously. In a month there were a dozen scholars; and in three months twenty little boys and girls managed to squeeze themselves into a space that would have horrified the sanitary inspectors of these days.

Thanks, however, to the perfect cleanliness observed, and the open door and window, no ill results obtained. The young South Australia, with its pure air, uncontaminated soil and virgin forests, knew but little of sickness. The disease microbe found no congenial habitation in which to spread and multiply.

As the numbers increased, Jessie helped with the babies of the school, and had her own lessons principally afterwards. Mr. Cassels often said it was an audacious scheme for two such mere children to attempt teaching; but audacity often carries the position.

Anne felt the greatest pride in her success. The little newspaper and brown paper parcels enclosing the ninepences and shillings which were handed to her every Monday morning were magic tokens, to be counted into her mother's hand. And she loved her work; it was a joy to teach, to watch the progress made by each pupil, and to know that in the process of preparing her lessons and imparting them to the children, she was herself gathering and consolidating knowledge; for there is nothing like teaching another a certain thing to impress it on one's own

mind. At last she felt she had found her rôle, and her foot was firmly placed upon the ladder by which she was to climb to fortune.

Mrs. Hall, who kept her promise of going to see them, warmly approved the new venture. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall came over for the evening, but Laurie was not able to be present ; Jessie said it was just like a party, for her mother had made a cake for the occasion, and as the weather was hot, concocted a big jug of lemonade, and the unwonted luxuries, together with the company, were quite exciting. They sat out in the back verandah, and watched the stars in their solemn march, and chatted of many matters, grave and gay.

But some of the things talked about Anne always remembered. Mrs. Hall had been telling them of the proposed London training school for domestics, and a remark by Mr. Marshall caused her to speak of other schemes for the improvement of the people, notably the temperance movement in Great Britain, which was taking root largely through the devoted labours of Father Matthew whom she knew personally ; and in the States of America by the exertions of Neal Dow.

Then Mr. Marshall quoted from memory Neal Dow's indictment of the liquor traffic.

"The liquor trade creates no wealth. It earns nothing, it lives upon the earnings of other trades, it adds nothing whatever to the wealth or power of the State ; nor to the prosperity or comfort of the people. This trade is wasteful, like war ; it destroys more of the wages of the people, and the results of useful industries than war, pestilence and famine combined. It creates more than three-fourths of the poverty, pauperism and crime of the country, and nearly one-half of the insanity. It inflicts a premature and shameful death upon tens of thousands of people annually ; it transforms hundreds of thousands of good industrious citizens into drunkards, vagabonds and tramps. It sends an infinite misery into hundreds of thousands of homes ; it puts the people down and keeps

them down. Its effect is to make the people ignorant, coarse, vulgar, brutal; enemies to law, order and good government."

"Every word of it is true," commented Mrs. Hall. "Any one who has lived and worked among the poor of any great city can see it for themselves. If the representatives of the two great divisions of the Christian Church—Catholic and Protestant—would only join hands in social work the drink trade would be doomed; and then what an uplifting of the masses! And that joining of forces may, no, must come in the end, otherwise Christianity would be a failure."

"You are not of those then who think there is one infallible church?" queried Mr. Marshall.

"No, indeed. I love the church in which I was brought up, but all who serve the Master are my brethren and sisters. What matter the shape of the cup from which men drink of the water of life?"

She sailed next week for England, and after that letters came from her, and books and papers also; so that Laurie said half jealously they allowed the new friend to do more than the old. But the pressure of poverty being relaxed lessened the fear of degenerating into pauperism, and rendered the need of guarding against it less urgent.

Among the books Mrs. Hall sent were two dealing with the kindergarten method of teaching which was beginning to attract notice in England. Anne studied and adopted some of the exercises for her scholars; and on fine days the benches were carried into the garden, where the children read and sewed, and sang and marched to the accompaniment of the scent of flowers, the rustling of leaves, and the buzzing of bees.

Addition and subtraction were learned by the aid of counting grasses or pebbles; the alphabet by writing letters on a sand patch. Reeds were woven into tiny baskets, book-marks and mats made of coloured paper. Thoughts might wander from hard and dry facts when a flock of cockatoos flew screaming overhead, or a wild

thrush poured out his heart in song from a neighbouring bush, but anything lost in one way was more than made up by the stimulation of fancy, and the strengthening of little bodies in the fresh air, and golden sunshine.

Reading of kindergarten work had made Anne long to learn German, and when one Monday morning a little German girl became her pupil, she thought she saw the way to attain her desire. So after consultation with her parents, the little schoolmistress interviewed her new pupil's mother, and asked if she would, in exchange for her daughter's tuition, give Anne an hour's lesson a week in reading German.

Thrifty Mrs. Schultz was only too glad to save the ninepence a week, for her husband's pay as a journeyman saddler was not great, and they were but recent emigrants from the Fatherland.

Henceforward then, on every Wednesday afternoon, when the school had been dismissed, Anne found her way to the little two-roomed cottage which for her possessed quite a flavour of romance. The draping of the windows, the quaintly carved chairs, the enormous feather beds, Mrs. Schultz's long dangling ear-rings, the lightning-speed clicking of her knitting needles, her broken English and voluble German, all gave Anne a delightful feeling of moving among foreign scenes. The only drawback was the ignorance of her instructress on the point of grammar.

"So, I not you can tell. I know it is so, only whatever." she would answer, making her long ear-rings dance with the energetic shaking of her head, in answer to the eager questioning. But by the aid of an old second-hand German grammar and dictionary which Laurie had ferreted out and bought for a few pence, Anne made progress that astonished and charmed her teacher.

The vessel that Hugh had shipped in returned in about a year, and the cabin boy who stepped ashore from his first trip was a much subdued, and in some respects a wiser individual than when he ran away to seek fame and fortune.

In those lonely months among the rough men who made

a butt and scapegoat of him, poor Hugh looked back with indescribable longing to the dear home he had so lightly left, and sick of heart had often vowed that he would never again leave it, could he once return.

He was made much of at home, and the shells and corals and fans that he had brought with him were admired and prized. But weeks slipped by, and no suitable employment on land offered, or none that both he and his parents were agreed in thinking suitable. At last he grumblingly accepted an apprenticeship which Mr. Gollan, for the sake of his parents, obtained for him on board a vessel of which the firm were part owners.

Before he left home he gave his father a promise to abstain altogether from alcohol until he was twenty-one. For some years Mr. and Mrs. Cassels had tacitly given up even their formerly very moderate use of stimulants, and knowing the special danger that drink assumes for the sailor, were very thankful for Hugh's acquiescence in their wish. His position was now a very different one from that of cabin boy, and he departed, full of good resolutions to work hard, and rise at an early date to the post of captain.

CHAPTER XIII

LIQUOR DEALER'S ADVERTISEMENT

SWISH, swash ; swish, swash. Anne's hands went up and down in the water, rubbing and scrubbing and wringing, while her eyes were every now and then lifted to the book standing on a ledge in the uneven wall of the wash-house ; and her lips kept moving as she repeated the words of one of Schiller's poems.

Presently she took up her basket of clothes and went to the lines ; as she reached up, peg in hand, she glanced at the sky, so soft and freshly washed with the dew of the night before. A wattle bird was calling with flute-like notes to his mate, from the branch of a young gum, whose plummy top showed glories of crimson and mauve, purple and ochre in the sunlight.

"Dort erblich ich schone Hugel ; Ewig jung und ewig grun !" she sang, as she looked towards the distant hills.

A cooe caused her to turn round. Laurie was passing up the street, waving his hat at her, and she laughingly swung a wet towel in return. As she shook and pegged and pulled out her linen, thought ran happily to and fro in her small head.

"I know that piece of Schiller's by heart now. What a lucky girl I am to have hit on Mrs. Schultz. It was so kind of her to lend me the book."

She scanned appreciatively her line of clothes, showing off their whiteness against the blue sky.

"It looks a beautiful colour this week. Thank goodness I shall be finished by the time Jessie has breakfast ready."

She picked up her empty basket to return to the wash-

house, when Laurie's voice stopped her. "Gran sent me on a message, and I thought I might see you about, as it is washing-day, so brought this to show you. I must take the paper back as gran will want it."

As he spoke he unfolded the morning's paper, and pointed to an article on the necessity of the Government raising the status of education in the Colony; and advocating as a beginning the founding of a model school on the English lines, where there should be separate departments, for boys, girls, and infants. While Anne read, Laurie looked at the earnest face, the slim brown hands, the arms showing white where the sleeves were rolled up above her elbows, the neat print dress and holland apron.

"Well, what do you think of it?" as Anne raised her eyes. "It struck me that if the school was started, you might get a billet of some sort on the staff; a good many teachers will be wanted."

"I shall try and get the infant school," answered she with that lift of the chin and resolute set of the mouth he knew so well, and had so often teased her about.

"The infant school? How do you mean?"

"I mean the mistress-ship of the infant school. There are not many people in the Colony can teach kindergarten work; and that will be wanted for a model infant school. And I can; at least some of it, and I shall set to work to learn the other."

"You might get an appointment as assistant; but I don't think you would have a chance for the mistress business. There are sure to be heaps of applicants for it, and most likely they will get some one from England; besides, you are far too young."

"But every day I am getting older; and it will be some time before the school can be started. They would have to plan it, and there will be the building and lots of things. By that time I shall be much older. I tell you, Laurie, I shall be mistress of the infants, see if I don't," and she flourished the paper, triumphant in anticipation.

"All right; get it if you can," he laughed. "But

don't knock my hat off. I must hurry now," taking the paper from her hand, "so good-bye."

"I suppose it will be good-bye in earnest soon. Oh! how I wish I were a boy going to Cambridge. You are lucky."

"Yes, I suppose I am," he answered, not, however, looking as if he were particularly enraptured with his good luck. "By the way, do you know that Bob Norton is going by the same vessel?"

"No. Robert Norton? Oh! dear, how badly things are fixed in this world; that stupid to have a chance."

"He is not a bit stupid; he has plenty of brains, I can tell you."

"I don't know where they are then; he never lets me see them."

"You have never forgiven his trying to kiss you that time," said Laurie, with a grin.

Her red lips curved into a smile. "Oh! no, I don't think it is that. But I always think he is rather a silly sort of boy."

"Well, he won't be a silly man. He is going in for law, and will make his mark. Good-bye, I must hurry."

She was emptying her tubs and setting the wash-house in order when Walter came out, holding a dead fly in his hand.

"Where do flies go when they dies?" he questioned.

"I don't know," said Anne.

He was silent a moment, then said tentatively, "Eileen said something about Hell."

"Oh! no. I expect they go to dust, and we sweep them away," answered Anne, whose thoughts were turned towards the coming model school.

"But, Anne, what did you tell me about the spirit?" and his eyes opened wide.

She was saved from further answer by her mother's appearance.

"Tired, dear, after your washing?"

"Not a bit of it," she answered brightly; "soaking in

the clothes the day before, and putting everything ready, and the wringer, makes washing quite easy. But what do you think ? There is a talk of starting a model school in Adelaide. Laurie brought me the paper to see an article on it, and—— ”

“ Come in to breakfast now ; you can tell me while you are having it.”

But before sitting down to her own meal, Anne took in her father's tray, and stopped to tell him about the wonderful new idea, and then at the table enlarged on it to her mother. Mrs. Cassels pointed out her lack of experience in teaching a large number of children, and her youth, as likely to militate against her chances.

“ Well, mother, I suppose there is no harm in my trying to prepare myself for it,” she said warmly.

“ No harm at all, but much good. Only I don't want you to set your heart on the impossible, and then be disappointed.”

“ Anne is always so conceited,” said Jessie, slowly spinning her porridge round in the milk. “ She always thinks she can do anything.”

“ Well, I know I can do what other people can, if I have the same chance ; you will just see if you live long enough. A girl ought to be able to work a way as well as a boy.”

“ P'raps she ought, but p'raps she can't. Haven't I done this porridge well ? See, it is just like a jelly. I measured everything the way you showed me, mother, and put it in to soak last night, and it was cooked in exactly half the time.”

Having received her meed of praise, Jessie subsided, while Anne resumed her argument. “ I was reading the other day that those people who have succeeded in attaining any object they have set themselves, have always prepared beforehand for the chance which is sure to come. The people who fail are those who wait for the chance to come, and then begin to get ready for it.”

“ Quite true, dear ; your opportunity will come ; and it will not find you unprepared, of that I am sure. But

this infant mistress project may not be the one meant for you," said Mrs. Cassels, rising to answer to the shop bell.

"I wonder what my chance will be?" said Jessie.

"Perhaps head of a cooking school, if Mrs. Hall ever sets up an Adelaide college for household helps."

"It would be better than teaching your sort of school," and Jessie gathered up the last drop of milk in her spoon, then went on. "But I don't mean to do anything. I shall marry somebody with heaps and heaps of money, so that I won't have to work at all."

"That would be a poor way of getting a living," and Anne's lip curled contemptuously. "I shall never marry anybody, but if I did, I would like to marry some one I could help. It must be horrid to have somebody else giving you everything, and you doing nothing."

"Horrid! I think it would be lovely? Nothing to do but dress up and ride in a buggy or a carriage, and go to England like Laurie, and—and buy as much almond rock as you like, or anything else, and have nice things for breakfast. I hate porridge," and she gave her plate a vicious push.

"It did not look like it just now," and Anne's face dimpled.

"Well, I do. Will Mitchell says I am to marry him when I grow up, and they have heaps and heaps of money. Look at all those new rooms they have built on to their house."

"Don't talk like a silly little booby, but pass the bread."

"I'm not a silly little booby. I'm nearly eleven, and Will always calls me his little wife, and I suppose you don't want him yourself, because you say you are going to marry a beggar man, and I don't believe he likes you much."

"Do stop talking such rubbish," and Anne stood up and stamped her foot as in her early childish days. "I tell you I won't marry anybody. I'm always going to earn

my own living, and I don't care whether Will Mitchell likes me or not."

"Why, what a fuss you make," said Jessie, staring at her sister's excited face. "You can earn your own living if you like, but I won't if Will or anybody else rich asks me to marry them."

"Them! How many of them? Your grammar is awful, Jessie. You are too silly for words. If mother were to hear you talk such nonsense, what do you suppose she would say? You had better run and fetch father's tray. I must get ready for school, it is late." She went out of the room, leaving Jessie in high dudgeon.

Laurie, as he hurried home, after leaving Anne, hardly felt himself the lucky boy she called him. Certainly, it was the desire of his heart to study medicine; and as there was no University in Australia, his projected departure for one of the ancient seats of learning was but the carrying out of his wishes. This, however, entailed leaving his grandmother and the Cassels, and a wrench from all his old associations.

Besides, there had been for some time, going on within his mind, a ferment of feeling and opinion, which seemed dividing him more and more from his grandmother, and was a source of exquisite pain to them both. From the time Anne's question, "Don't you hate to live in a public-house?" fell on his ears, he had been gradually acquiring a conviction that the drink traffic degraded every one connected with it; and lately he had reached the point of considering whether it was right for him to allow the profession he loved to be bought for him with the price of drink. He had never spoken of the matter to any one, but night and day he brooded over it, so that all the joy he would otherwise have taken in seeing the fulfilment of his wishes drawing near was poisoned.

Mrs. Johnstone resented bitterly his tacit condemnation of the drink trade. It was a continual offence to her that he had become a total abstainer; and that on the rare occasions, now that she considered him old enough to go

into the bar, she asked him to take charge of it for an hour or so, he did it with obvious unwillingness and was curt, sometimes even positively disagreeable in his manner to the customers. Many of the regular habitués knew of his dislike to the business, and sneers and jokes about her grandson's fads were not infrequently cast at her.

Then, too, was his close friendship with the Cassels. At first it had pleased her; but the last year or two a feeling of jealousy of the family had displaced the former sentiment. She saw how blithely he went to them, and with what ever-increasing disgust he mixed in the public-house life; and she traced his teetotalism, not unjustly, to their influence.

This morning, as he entered the bar door, he brushed against a dirty old toper coming out. Another man, dressed as a clergyman, was talking to Mrs. Johnstone, while he slowly sipped his glass of wine.

"These extremists," he was saying, "do an immense amount of harm. The man ought to be prosecuted for sending out such handbills; it is a libel on a respectable class of citizens."

"I only read the first line or two of the one they left here, and then threw it behind the fire."

"Quite right; it was not worth reading; but as I was telling you, they are pasting up the large ones all over the place. The worst of it is that as no one person is specially mentioned, I suppose the law cannot take cognizance, though the production is most insulting to respectable licensed victuallers like yourself. Of course, I believe in keeping the low-class houses in order; but respectable hotel keepers do not need it; for the sake of their own good name they will do all that is necessary."

There was a certain consciousness in the eyes that Mrs. Johnstone kept turned away from where Laurie stood waiting.

"Well, I must be going. Thank you for your very liberal contribution to the endowment fund. I don't know what the Church would do without your unfailing assistance. That new altar cloth you presented to the

mission was a great boon, the old one was absolutely disgraceful. Few of our churchpeople are as thoughtful as yourself. Ah! Laurie," as he turned from the bar, and shook hands with him. "Off to Cambridge soon, I hear. Lucky you, to have such a generous grandmother; but you are not the only one to profit by her generosity: we all do; we all do. Good morning, good morning." He went to where his horse was tied up outside, got on him and rode away.

"Anderson says he will send down the beer at once, gran, and you can pay him back with a cask of yours when it comes."

"I hope he was sober enough to know what he was promising; he is as often as not half drunk before breakfast."

"He was pretty well on, but still not so much but what he knew what he was doing."

"Old beast! I wouldn't have asked him to oblige me with the beer, only the brewery people can't send before afternoon, and then they may be late. I hate to ask a favour of such a man; but in business you must put up with such things, and I am quite out."

Laurie remembered with disgust the bleary-eyed, foul-mouthed old ruffian, trembling with palsy, said at one time to have been an Oxford don, but now the landlord of a low public-house. Drink had dragged him down and degraded him, and linked him with the coarse vulgar woman who was called by his name, but who was, so it was said, not legally entitled to bear it. He ran a dancing saloon in connexion with his business as a publican; and it was well known that a tremendous lot of gambling and drinking went on till all hours of the night, or rather morning, in one of the back rooms. The *Red Dragon* kept the police continually on the qui vive; but Anderson generally managed to evade detection; and though two or three times a small fine had been the penalty for being found out, it had only advertised his public-house to the kind of people supporting it. Had the penalty for wilfully break-

ing the law involved, as it ought to have done, the endorsement of his licence, and a second conviction its loss and the making it impossible to procure another, more than one miserable ruined man might have walked the earth free and happy.

“What handbills was Mr. Hardy talking about, gran?”

“Oh! a most insulting affair, I found under the bar door this morning; put there by some of your teetotal friends. I burnt it; but if you want to see what it was about, there will be plenty of opportunity. Keziah says she saw a man pasting one up at the hoarding.”

Laurie did not answer, and she went on. “You had better see the tailor this morning, and hurry him up with your new suits. You will want them on board ship, for there is no knowing what swells will be going home with you. I don’t suppose though that the clothes made here will be of much use to you in London. You will have to get a fresh rig out there, for I want you to dress like a gentleman.”

“You are always so kind, gran; but I do wish you were going too. Could you not arrange it? There is a fortnight yet, and you could get some one to take the business in that time.”

“No, no, dear lad. I shall be lonely enough without you, goodness knows; but I want you to have a fair start, and I should only be a drag.”

“What nonsense, gran! You could hold your own with anybody I know; you are so clever,” and he put his arm round her shoulder, for he stood nearly a head above her. Do come,” he pleaded again.

“You are a good lad, dear, to want your old gran with you,” and there was a moisture in the eyes that looked affectionately at him. “But it cannot be; I must be making the money to keep you at the University as a gentleman ought to be kept; and then it will take a good bit to set you up in practice. I mean you to have a fine new house and a brougham, and liveried coachman, and other servants, like the new doctor who has just set up.”

"But there would be no need for all that, gran. I could begin in a small way, and afterwards——"

"You must leave me to settle all that," she interrupted, half irritably. "The Colony is growing; and by the time you come back there will be great changes." She gave him a little push from her. "I believe it is because you want to get me out of the public-house, that you keep bothering me to go with you. Never fear, I promise to be out of it before you come back. I mean to be one of the chief partners in the brewery yet; and then we can afford to let the public-house go. There, will that satisfy you? I won't be a drawback to the rising young doctor. The principal owner in a big brewery like ours is going to be—big enough to export to the other colonies, and able to buy up half the hotels—can well afford to hold her head high."

"Why, in England brewers are getting into Parliament and all sorts of high positions, and are being made baronets and lords. There, go and look up the tailor after breakfast. I have had mine, and shall be busy all the morning making up the books."

Seeing that it was useless to further urge her, he did as he was bid, and Keziah brought him his plate of ham and eggs.

"Ow us be goin' to do we'out yer, Laurie, beats me. Yer granma bin main flyjum lately, and ef 'er gets badder and badder I'll be druv to marry some-un or 'nother ter get away from 'er."

"Don't leave her until I get back, at any rate, Keziah. Promise me you won't."

"I won't guv no promise; but ul try and take no notice o' er'. Times an many I'm feared I won't kep on wi 'er no longer; she be that 'ard an' bitter. It is as I allers says, ther aint no blessin' in this 'ere drink bus'ness, an' she ain't no 'appier fer all the brass she be a 'eapin hup. Maybe she'm be different wen she'm out o' the public, an' yer set up as a doctor to kill folkses we'out bein' 'ad hup fer it."

Laurie smiled. "Don't you think I might cure people sometimes, Keziah?"

"May'ap in mistake," she answered drily.

Laurie laughed out. "Anyhow, I won't kill you."

"Yer won't get no chance, lad. Ef I was hill, I oodent let no doctor nigh. Wen I 'as ter die, I dies natral, we'out yer filthy dollops and cuttin' up bus'ness. Once, soon after us coom inter this public, I got a bad pain in me chestes, an yer granma sent fer a doctor to see I. 'E put 'is hear down on me chestes, an' then I knew 'e wur no good, fer 'e didn't bring 'is trumpet. Yer know doctors allers 'as ter 'ave trumpets?"

Laurie nodded. "Stethoscope," he murmured, but Keziah took no notice.

"Then 'e says, ther hain't nothin' the matter wi' yer chestes; more like its from yer stummick; summat as yer 'ave ate; wot did yer 'ave fer brekfuss? I telled 'im, I 'ad me doubts whether I didn't eat tadpoles fer brekfuss."

"'Tadpoles?' 'e says, staring like a great gomril."

"'Yes, tadpoles,' I says, 'among the mushrooms.' Well, then the great stoopid didn't seem to knaw wot I meant, till yer granma splained. 'Er called tadpoles summat else, but tadpoles I called 'em, an' tadpoles I ull call 'em."

"Toadstools, you mean," corrected Laurie, grinning.

"Toestools ef yer likes; but tadpoles is good enough fer me. But I oodent take 'is physic nor nothin', I threw it out o' the winder. A doctor as didn't bring 'is trumpet wi' un; an didn't knaw nuthin o' tapdoles! Min wen yer gits ter be a doctor, Laurie, yer allers taks yer trumpet wi' yer, jest ter let folkses knaw yer unnerstand aboot it. I'll tak yer plate out now yer done yer pouched hegg, an there's the butter an' there's the fruit. I'm that busy, an' this cold weather me legs feel all in a scrim."

On his way to the tailor's, Laurie stopped at the bill-sticker's hoarding. The dirty toper who had been an early

visitor at the *Queen's Head* stood in front, hands in pocket, reading.

"By gum, that gives it 'em hot," he muttered. "And not a bit too hot," as he sauntered away.

There was a large bright-coloured poster headed "Advertisement" on the board, and as he read it Laurie's heart sunk low and a burning flush suffused his face.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Friends, I have opened a shop for the sale of liquid fire, and embrace this opportunity to inform you that I have commenced the business of making

DRUNKARDS, PAUPERS, and BEGGARS for the sober, industrious and respectable portion of the community to support. I shall deal in

FAMILY SPIRITS which shall take men from the ranks of productive industry, and excite them to deeds of

RIOT, ROBBERY, and BLOOD,

and by so doing diminish the comfort, augment the expenses, and endanger the welfare of the whole community.

I will undertake, at a short notice, for a small sum, and with great expedition, to prepare victims for the

ASYLUMS, POOR-HOUSES, PRISONS, and GALLOWS.

I will furnish an article which will increase the amount of fatal accidents, multiply the number of distressing diseases, and render those that might have been cured, incurable.

I will deal in drugs which will deprive some of *LIFE*, many of *REASON*, most of *PROPERTY*; which will cause fathers to become fiends, wives widows, children orphans, all of these mendicants.

I will cause many of the rising generation to grow up in ignorance, and prove a burden and nuisance to the nation.

I will cause mothers to forget their offspring, and cruelty to take the place of love.

I will sometimes even corrupt the ministers of religion, obstruct the progress of the Gospel, defile the purity of the Church, cause *TEMPORAL, SPIRITUAL and ETERNAL DEATH.*

And if any should be so impertinent as to ask why I have the audacity to bring such accumulated misery upon a comparatively happy people, my honest reply is,

MONEY.

The drink trade is lucrative, and some professing Christians give it their cheerful countenance.

I have a *LICENCE*, and if I do not bring these evils upon you *SOMEBODY ELSE WILL.*

I have purchased the right to do my best to demolish the *CHAR-*

ACTER, destroy the *HEALTH*, shorten the *LIVES*, and ruin the *SOULS* of those who choose to honour me with their regular custom.

I pledge myself to do all I have herein promised. Those who wish any of the evils specified above to be brought on themselves or their dearest friends are requested to

MEET ME AT MY BAR,

where I will, for a few cents, furnish them with the certain means of accomplishing their wishes.

The above is a genuine advertisement written by a publican in the United States. All who are interested in the subject matter are cordially invited to attend, on Saturday evening, a meeting in the North Adelaide Temperance Hall.

No Collection.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FRATRICIDE

WHEN Laurie interviewed Anderson about the supply of beer for his grandmother he merely gave his message, and receiving the answer, got outside as quickly as possible, purposely taking no notice of a number of men who were standing or lolling about ; and only giving a side glance of loathing at a woman who was shrilly laughing at the antics of a half-drunken man.

" Lemme alone," said the man with a volley of oaths, when she caught hold of his arm and knocked his hat over his eyes, as Laurie disappeared.

She shrieked again with laughter when he nearly fell down, in an attempt to catch hold of her.

A policeman looked in at the door. " You are beginning early. Making noise enough," he said, nodding at Anderson.

" There's no 'arm in a laugh, I s'pose ? " said the woman impudently. " No one is doin' any 'arm."

As the officer did not see anything to which he could legally take exception, he went out again.

" Hold your tongue, Sall," commanded Anderson. " You always are brawling and yelling about the place."

" 'Old yer own," she flashed defiantly. "'Ere Billy," to the partner of her elephantine gambols. " Stan' treat again, ole man, all round. Yer so flush o' money, that yer can well afford to ; an I'll serve yer myself, an kiss the glasses," and again her hideous laughter rang out.

" Ri' yer are, me gal," answered Billy, " come on mates,"

and the men crowded round the woman's end of the bar.

"Who was that young spark, as was 'ere a minute ago?" asked one of the drinkers.

"Oh! 'e," replied Sal. "'E belongs to the ole woman as keeps the *Queen's 'Ead*; Johnstone is 'er name. An' a stuck up piece she is; looks at me an' Anderson as if we was dirt."

A man who had been standing beside the questioner opened his lack lustre eyes suddenly, and almost dropped the glass he was raising to his lips.

"Was that Laurie?"

"Yes, do yer know 'im?" and the woman looked inquisitively at her interlocutor.

He put back his glass on the counter, and hurrying outside gazed down the street.

"Well, I never! Wot's hup?" she inquired of the man who had first asked about Laurie.

"I'm blest if I didn't think I knew that young 'un's face. Let's sec. You wasn't 'ere wen we last come down for a spree. It was Murphy 'ad this place."

"E's dead, 'e is, long ago; an' we took it from 'im."

"Well, Mark, 'im as just gone out, was barman at the *Queen's 'Ead* then, to the old woman."

"Oh! that's it. Come on, gals," as two flashily dressed girls—one not more than sixteen, the other a year older—came in. "Now's yer chance, all these genelum as got the stuff, an' will stan treat ter yer. Fus come, fus served."

The two girls, mere children in age, but old in vice, were soon supplied with drink; and the hideous laughter, foul language and filthy jests made a perfect pandemonium.

In a short time Mark came back and sat down in a corner, where he remained, drinking steadily, but in silence, after rebuffing angrily one of the girls who tried to sit upon his knee.

"Leave the surly bloke alone, come 'ere," shouted Tom. And the girl transferred herself to him.

For the past four years Mark had travelled with the two brothers, working at shearing most of the time. Twice before they had all started with heavy cheques to come to Adelaide, but on each occasion a lonely bush public-house had swallowed up their earnings, and they had been forced to return to their work, penniless, and again labour like galley slaves for money that would, when obtained, be spent in its turn in low dissipation.

This time they had managed, as well as several others of their mates, to keep their vow not to touch drink until they reached the city, for all well knew that one glass would be fatal to their resolution. Now they were making up for their abstinence, and all fast becoming intoxicated. By the time evening fell, several were lying senseless in the dead-house, put there out of the way of too inquisitive policemen. One or two had wandered forth to give some other public benefactor the chance of receiving part of their coin. But Mark, Tom and Harry still were able, by the aid of various snatches of drunken sleep sandwiched in between their potations, to stand up to their grog, as Anderson phrased it.

The two girls, who had disappeared since midday, now returned, and the one who had attracted Tom's attention in the morning, seemed disposed to transfer herself to Harry, but Tom with an oath dragged her from Harry's side. Harry, usually mild-tempered and peaceable, resented this, unexpectedly knocked his brother down and grappled with him on the floor. It was with difficulty they were separated, and the blood flowing from Tom's eye, stanchd.

Anderson, for a wonder, was tolerably sober; and, afraid of the police coming in, bade Sall get the girls out of the way. Then producing a hand-bill which was the facsimile of the one Laurie had read on the hoarding, fastened it to the wall with a couple of tacks and began reading portions aloud, to divert the attention of the combatants.

"I don't mind it, pals, it's all true, but what do we care? Let the drink do its worst, we will stick to it like bricks. 'Meet me at my bar.' Good, very good. 'Meet me at my bar,' that is all I want. You are not to be frightened by a lot of canting humbugs. Stand up to your drink like men. 'Meet me at my bar.' Ha! Ha!"

They asseverated that he was a jolly good fellow, and one shearer started a song about the "flowing bowl" but at the second line went to sleep instead.

Sall came back, and seeing the sheet on the wall and hearing Anderson continuing his selections, called out in her coarse voice thick with drink—

"Wot about the ole woman at the *Queen's 'Ead*? Let us go an' read it ter 'er."

Anderson tried to hush her, but Tom swore it was a good idea, saying he owed the old woman a grudge, and he pulled the bill from the wall. It was torn in halves, and with one in each hand he started for the door, calling on the others to follow. Only Harry, Mark and one other man, however, accepted his invitation.

Several callers were drinking at the *Queen's Head*; but they were an orderly group, and the barman was serving them. The new arrivals were strangers to him, and he proceeded to furnish the nobblers Tom demanded, stating in answer to his questions that Mrs. Johnstone would be back in about half an hour, and that she had gone to attend a church meeting.

Mark had slunk in behind the others and established himself in a corner; looking round every now and then with scared and furtive glance. Tom offered to treat all round and the barman was kept hard at it; for as fast as one lot was consumed another was ordered. He, however, began to feel troubled as Tom got more and more noisy, for well he knew that his mistress would not willingly allow rowdyism on the premises, and he could see trouble would befall him, unless Tom were induced to leave, or else keep silence.

But Tom refused either alternative, and infuriated

at the proposal, turned on his brother who had suggested that they might as well go back to the *Red Dragon*.

"Go back if yer want, yer wite livered cur. I'll see the ole woman, if I stay all night," and he suddenly hit Harry a violent blow on the temple. Of the two he was much the more intoxicated, for he could scarcely keep on his feet. Harry had been sulking since Tom dragged the girl away from him, and now filled with sudden access of fury such as sometimes seizes hold of apparently mild natures, when excited by drink, he closed with his brother and knocked him down for the second time that evening. Then stooping he clutched Tom's legs as the latter partly rose, and throwing him down again banged his head upon the floor two or three times.

After the first effort Tom made no resistance; and when the barman with the help of some of the others, dragged Harry off, Tom lay without moving, still and quiet.

"Good God! I believe he has killed him," exclaimed one of the men in horrified accents.

The cry fell on the ears of Mrs. Johnstone and Laurie as they came in together. When nearing home the noise had alarmed them and caused them to hasten their steps.

Mrs. Johnstone took in the situation at a glance, and for the moment stood transfixed, prayer-book in hand, looking at the purple stream that stained the floor. Then she threw her book on a bench and running forward, kneeled beside the prone figure. At her command the barman rushed away for a doctor, and when in a few minutes he came, she was just desisting from her efforts to restore consciousness. One look was sufficient for the doctor. "Nothing can be done for him, the man is dead," he said. "Better send for a policeman to take that man in charge," pointing in the direction of the wretched Harry, who with his rage spent and an idiot grin upon his face, was held tightly on each side by two of the bystanders.

Then Laurie saw one with livid face and staring eyes come from the group which stood around the dead man, and muttering "Drink and blood; drink and blood," vanish through the door into the outer darkness.

CHAPTER XV

THE TEMPERANCE LECTURER

THE end of the week had come, and the usual Saturday night's trade was brisk at the *Queen's Head*, for the customers who were spending the pay that should have gone to provide for their wives and children, found agreeable accompaniment to the swallowing of beer and spirits, in talking over the tragedies of the past week. Tragedies, for the day after the murder, some boys going to bathe in a hole in the Torrens, found the body of a man, which had since been identified as that of Mrs. Johnstone's at one time barman, Mark.

Laurie had recognized him at the moment when he disappeared in the darkness, but was too stunned by what had just occurred to follow him instantly; and when his leaden feet did carry him outside, Mark was nowhere to be seen. Whether wandering about, he had tumbled over the bank, and in his intoxicated condition could not save himself; or whether, half maddened, he had thrown himself into the water, could not be determined, so an open verdict of "Found drowned," was given.

A verdict of "wilful murder," had been returned against the fratricide, Harry. The wretched creature was at first quite incapable of understanding what had happened, but laughed and exulted drunkenly, saying he had "paid ole Tom out." Next morning when the effects of the drink had partly worked off, and he was told of his crime, his agony was something awful to behold.

Rough men, coarse through heredity and environment, there had yet been a deep and strong, though mostly dumb

affection between the two. As the unfortunate creature lay face down on the hard bench of his cell, he recalled how Tom, when they were children, used to shield him from the savage blows of drunken father and mother, give him the best part of their scanty fare, and in a hundred ways act well the elder brother's part.

Then when, as orphan lads in their teens, a chance had come for the waifs to get a passage to Australia, Tom it was who took all the responsibility, sought for employment and decided upon whatever course was chosen. Being strong and wiry, and hard workers, they had for some years done well; and sitting beside their camp fire used to talk of the time when they would have saved money enough to take up land; and looking still further ahead could see happy homes, prosperity and wealth awaiting them.

But the taint in their blood, and the temptations of the bush public-house had in the end overcome them. To the lonely worker in the back blocks, with a pocket full of money, the allurements of the public-house are almost irresistible; unless fortunately he be a total abstainer. There is no other place of entertainment; nowhere else where he can board and lodge for a few days; nowhere else where he can obtain the lights, the rough music, the dancing, the game of cards. When once a descent has been made into the "inferno of drunkenness" the demons never cease to call to him, and in not one case in a thousand can he disobey.

With body bent, with face sun scarred, with hands blistered he toils and toils among the herds, in the mine, at shearing shed, and as soon as he can draw his cheque, he rushes away to throw the fruits of months or years of severest labour into the hands of the public-house keeper.

So it had been with Tom and Harry, until their dreams of competence and wealth had all vanished, and they had hopelessly settled down into the knowledge that never for them would there be love, and home and innocent pleasure; but always the toil, the drink and the sinking

deeper and deeper and yet deeper into the pit of ruin. And now it had all ended, Tom in a drunkard's grave, Harry in a murderer's cell.

Laurie came out on this Saturday evening to walk under the quiet stars ; and left behind him the smell of beer, the sound of clinking glasses, of voices chatting cheerfully, of now and then a laugh. There was nothing unseemly, for Mrs. Johnstone was in the bar, and unless some bleared eyes and shaking hands and ragged clothes could be considered unfitting the environment, all was most decorous. But to Laurie sight and smell and hearing seemed to bring him in touch with devils.

He walked slowly down the street, passing the lighted shop window through which he could see Mrs. Cassels and Jessie ; the one weighing out goods, the other tying up the parcels. But though they were alone, he did not go in ; for his present state of mind unfitted him to meet them.

Since that horrible Tuesday evening he had scarcely eaten or slept. Day and night he heard Mark's voice muttering "Drink and blood ; drink and blood," until it seemed to him that it would almost drive him mad, unless the muttering stopped.

He had followed the lonely coffin which contained the remains of his childhood's friend ; and sick at heart had come back to listen to his grandmother's cynical remarks. For as life advances none of us stand still ; we either climb higher or sink lower ; and Mrs. Johnstone had sunk from the time that she deliberately elected to make the gaining of money her first aim.

A fight was raging in Laurie's breast. Could he go on profiting by this accursed drink business ; if not, what should be his course ?

He looked up at the shining worlds hung in the unfathomable depths of space and wondered if any one living there knew of this mad earth ; where governments set up for the protection of the weak, for the restraint of the lawless, suffered a monster to grow and grow, and with its hideous

arms encircle and crush out the life of nations that would otherwise have been prosperous and happy. These governments, as the gold dropped from the hands of the victims who were breathed upon and strangled by the destroyer, rewarded with place and power the men who profited most largely by the vampire's poisonous breath. What a hideous farce! Would not even anarchy and chaos be better?

For an hour he wandered on, not heeding where he went, wrapped in his own thoughts, deaf and blind to the outside world. Then he became aware that he was among a number of people who were in front of the lately erected Temperance Hall. The large windows were ablaze with light; and he remembered with a sort of shock, that this was the evening the meeting indicated in the poster was to be held.

Mechanically he turned his steps towards the porch, and then gradually worked his way among the crowd until he stood within the hall. The building was crammed from platform to door. Seated side by side were clergymen and publicans, ladies and charwomen, brewers and artizans, saints and sinners. The strange advertisement had attracted wide-spread attention, so that both the advocates of temperance and the supporters of the liquor traffic had mustered in force.

A middle-aged, worn-faced, very tall man, spare of build, was addressing the audience. Dressed in a grey slop-made suit, neither voice nor accent bespeaking high cultivation, he yet commanded those before him by the fire of conviction, and the earnestness that never fails to arrest attention.

"The price of blood," he was saying, and his voice ran through the hall like a trumpet. "It is the price of blood you brewers and publicans and wine-makers hold in your hands, and store up in your bank balances. Then you go into your churches and, bowing before the One who not only sacrificed home and friends and every comfort and pleasure, but even laid down His life on the bitter Cross,

for the sake of His brethren and yours—your brethren also, mind you—you listen to His command, ‘Whosoever will be My disciple must deny himself, and follow Me.’ And then what do you do? How do you follow Him? You place on the collection plate, as your offering, the price of blood; the blood of not only bodies, but souls.

“‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ you cry. ‘Yes,’ I answer, ‘you are, and God will require your brother’s life at your hands. You who traffic in this accursed thing, because it is an easy way to pay for your clothes and food, and tables and chairs, and houses and lands, are of the brethren of Cain. Above every drinking shop flies the black flag of death. No single keeper of a drinking bar exists who can truly say that he has never given poison to the already perishing, that through him no home has been made desolate. On the contrary, from every such place proceed murder, suicide, theft, disease, ruined homes, broken lives. Your Governments count the sum the State receives on the duty derived from alcohol, but they should deduct from it the cost to the community of the family of the ruined drunkard, his degenerate, infirm, scrofulous and epileptic children.

“Taxpayer, think of this. The most reliable authorities state that it is a moderate computation to say that seven-tenths of all crime is committed under the influence of drink. The prisons, lunatic asylums, reformatories; the policemen, warders, magistrates and judges that have to be paid for to cope with this body of crime, are paid for out of the pockets of the taxpayers—your pockets. You would only have three-tenths of that cost, if drink were driven out of the land.”

“You can’t drive it out,” called a voice; ‘men will have an intoxicant.’”

“Will they? Why, there are hundreds of millions of people in this world who have never tasted intoxicants, or any drug of corresponding influence; neither they, nor their fathers, nor grandfathers before them. I am speaking of Hindoos, Buddhists and Mahomedans.”

"Ya ! niggers," shouted the same voice.

"Yes, people who produced such niggers as Zoroaster, Buddha, Mahomet ; but I suppose from the tone of your remark, my friend, that you never heard of any other sort of what you would call niggers than 'Brudder Bones and Company.'"

There was a ripple of laughter all over the hall.

"Experience proves beyond doubt," he went on, "that the use of alcoholic beverages tends inevitably to increase the appetite for them. There is a fatal fascination about the poison. Those who succumb to the drink custom, sooner or later suffer degeneracy, poverty, disease, crime, vice, insanity and death ; but in addition to this, the prevalence of drinking often endangers those also who are innocent of the drink habit. Annually thousands are killed by the mania of other people for drink.

"We can all call to mind the serious accidents occasioned by it: the railway disasters, the shipwrecks, the disablement in factories, and wherever people are at work. We recall the crimes that are perpetrated during the influence of drink, the countless cases of violence and manslaughter, the innumerable families suffering abuse from the drunken head of their household.

"I speak of what I know. I once was of the brotherhood of Cain. I, too, through lust of wealth, was guilty of my brother's blood. I, too, was even such a one as you, brewers, publicans, and wine-sellers. I, too, soddened my brain and sank into the abyss of delirium tremens." He paused, evidently struggling with painful emotion.

"But the mercy of my God found me, showed me the pit into which I had fallen, reached down a hand to save and release me."

As his voice sunk and broke, a man near the platform said—

"Because you can't take a glass without making a beast of yourself, you think no one else can."

"Not so, my friend," he answered, raising his head with the fire of battle again in his eye. "I am fully aware that

there are many men who may, and can remain moderate drinkers all their lives? But seeing the awful issues at stake, I say no truly Christian man, no man who tries to love his neighbour as himself, can possibly realize the frightful suffering involved in this commerce of drink, without feeling called upon to give up his little personal gratification for the good of the many. It is the moderate drinkers who keep the trade going. If the known drunkards only were its support, it could not stand; the vileness, the rottenness of it would be so apparent. The pleasure of a momentary gratification causes your moderate drinker to bring nearly every imaginable misery that this world holds upon his weaker brethren. He refuses to join hands with the little old Jew who said, 'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth,' and 'Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?'

"Shame upon you Church members who partake of the symbols of renunciation, by which sacrament you swear to follow your Lord and Master even unto cross and death, but instead turn aside to wherever an altar is set up to the worship of the god of drink, and quaff an oblation unto him.

"And still more shame upon you clergymen, the avowed ministers of Him who said, 'I come to give My life a ransom for many. I have given you an example.' How many have you ransomed from the heavy yoke? You, who sit at home in your studies and shut your ears to the cry of the bond-slave of drink. You sit at ease and sip your glass, and then dare to speak with contempt of the poor drunkard for whom Christ died, but for whom you would not deny yourself, to save his body and soul from hell, a pleasant drink! What use is it for you to ask the wretched dipsomaniac to give up what is more to him than wife and children, and reputation, and peace of mind, while you will not set him an example by giving up a pleasant drink? A pleasant drink—no more."

The indescribably scorching scorn of his tones caused

more than one gentleman in white neck-cloth to wish that his curiosity had not brought him thither.

“And you, publicans, who realize what you are doing—for some of you do—you stand on a lower rung of the ladder of life than even Judas Iscariot occupied; for he did demand thirty pieces of silver for his Lord’s betrayal, but you for a paltry sixpence sell any miserable wretch who asks you the glass that makes him murderer or suicide, betraying him to utter damnation.

“And you, like Judas, think to escape; but you will not. God will require from you an account of the souls you have helped to sink below the level of the beasts which perish so that you may fill your pockets with bits of yellow and white metal. He will require from you your brothers’ souls; yea, and still more, those of your sisters: those sisters crushed and mangled in the unequal fight, who have been flung upon the streets so that you might live delicately.

“And you will have to pay; mark that! How, I do not know; but as surely as God lives, as surely as you and your present victims live, you will have to pay.

“Already the making payment has begun; some of you by the fatal serpent of drink having fastened upon your own bodies, or the bodies of those dearer to you than life. Let each one of this audience present count up the publicans known to him or her, and then consider how many have escaped that part of the price.

“Some of you have begun to pay through the worm of conscience that dieth not eating out your heart of hearts, and telling of a certain fiery looking forward to of judgment.

“Some of you, worse still, pay by your blinded eyes, by your deadened hearts; calling right wrong, and wrong, right.

“We can see every day, every hour, the beginning of the price that is being paid here; but what of the hereafter? Through the eternity to come there will be for ever the scorching remembrance of your vileness; in that you sold and betrayed your brethren for a sum of money, which

you had at last to leave behind you. You will call to mind that you fastened on your sister's neck the devil's fetters, and trampled her down into the mire, and pushed her to the gate of hell, so that you for a few years might eat and drink and lie at ease."

"A man must live," said a hoarse, sullen voice.

"What? Live so that little children may die of hunger; that their mothers may go in rags; that their fathers may hang on the scaffold? Live? at such a price! One must not live, I tell you, when one cannot live with honour, but die, die.

"Brave men die every day, pour out their lives like water to rescue comrades, to defend the weak, to uphold the right; and you. Shall you prolong the fleeting existence of your pampered bodies by drinking the life-blood of your brother or sister?

"We are living in an age when the conception of human brotherhood and consequent responsibility is taking on larger dimensions. We are moving towards the time when there will be a combination of the whole of the Christian churches against vice. It must come, it is coming; not yet, but I see it from afar. A Christian brotherhood leagued against the vice of the world. Hitherto such a brotherhood has been impossible. The various churches have been too busy denouncing each other's shibboleths, and demanding the subscribing to their own, to have time to mass against the common foe.

"The army of destruction is in the midst of the world, advancing under the black flag of death. It is coming along with sullen tramp, recruiting at every grog shop and den of infamy, showing its fury in drunken brawls, revealing its ruffianism in highway robbery, parading its moral filth in unblushing debauchery. A great army, with staggering step and drunken hoot. It is coming to assert its power at the polling booth, and make its influence felt in legislative halls. Let those who stand for righteousness assault, assail, and by the power of God defeat it."

A tumultuous cheer arose from the lecturer's supporters, and it was some minutes before he could proceed.

"We who fight for the right, fight under the Captaincy of the Most High, and therefore each soldier in the ranks knows that he is on the side of the Omnipotent, whose cause must in the end prevail. Even one with God is a majority, and the ones are ever multiplying.

"What is your silver and your gold, you capitalists of the drink trade? Do you forget Him who said, 'The silver and the gold are Mine?' Not yours to do with as you would. When your bodies moulder in the dust, will your silver and your gold avail you aught?

"Most of this audience join at least once a week in the Lord's Prayer, and repeat 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.' What do you do to help the bringing in of Christ's Kingdom? Buy brewery shares perhaps; perhaps sell brandy over the bar to men and women who are ruining themselves for the sake of drink. Perhaps stand quietly by and see evil flourish; too careless, too indifferent to move a finger in helping those who are ready to perish.

"'Rot,' did you say, my friend to the left? I thank you for that word. Yea, truly, I am speaking of the dry rot that is undermining our Western civilization. Every day, every hour, a plank gives way here, a beam there. Root up, burn, destroy that which fills the earth with wailing and with tears."

He had spoken with extraordinary vehemence; now he stopped, looked slowly all round the hall, then sank his voice persuasively.

"But in this audience there are surely some ready to listen to the Voice that calls across the ages, 'Leave all and follow Me.' Deep down in every human heart is the germ of self-sacrifice, and if only the dirt and refuse be removed so that the light can penetrate, the germ will develop into root and leaf and blossom. Self-renunciation is the only road by which souls reach the highest altitudes, self-renunciation is the highest law of our mystic being;

and it forces men from ease and self-indulgence, and riot, to choose rather bareness of life, poverty and humility, so that losing their lives they may in very truth find them.

"Yes, I see it from afar." The speaker raised both arms, and in his eyes shone the prophetic fire that inspired the ancient Hebrew seers. "The perfect day of which the dawn rose when the first soul distinguished between right and wrong, and consciously chose the right. Each æon since has brought us nearer to the goal of perfected humanity. Mists and clouds now obscure the risen Sun of Righteousness, but we thrill with the warmth that precedes His glorious shining form."

His arms slowly fell and he bent his head, while an electric thrill ran through the audience ; and in the silence there came a sound of sobbing breath as after great tension. Even the scoffers were hushed into a sort of awe. When he spoke again it was in firm, deliberate tones.

"I repeat to-night the Master's words, 'Follow Me, deny yourselves, take up your cross.' Stand firm against whatever tends to corrupt humanity ; and in this regard we all know that the drink trade is pre-eminent. None are too old, none too young, none too rich, none too poor, none too wise, none too ignorant to sacrifice something in helping on this holy war.

"You who have become rich through the sale of what debases and depraves can throw it all aside to follow Him. You who have bowed your neck to the drunkard's yoke can, by the help of God, abstain for evermore from the cup of ruin. You who are temperate drinkers can, for your brothers' sake, for your sisters' sake, forswear a little pleasant tickling of the palate. You who would uplift the world of men, can band yourselves together for the sake of your homes, for the sake of humanity, to oust this devil's worship, and work towards the prohibition of the making and the sale of intoxicants in this fair southern land."

There was a perfect storm of applause that drowned all dissentient voices. When silence was restored, the lecturer

again arose and urged those willing to become total abstainers and workers in the cause he advocated, to come forward and sign the pledge. At once scores of people began making their way towards the table just below the platform, where the pledge-book lay. Some around Laurie stood on the forms to see who were signing, and he did likewise.

The first to affix his name to the sheet was the old toper whom he had seen reading the advertisement on the hoarding. The next was Anne Cassels, and the third Mr. Marshall.

Up till that moment Laurie had felt like a wild creature entrapped, seeing no avenue of escape. Now a hand beckoned to a definite issue, and obeying the summons, he stepped on the floor and mingled in the stream setting towards the upper end of the room. Half way up he came near to Anne, with Mr. Marshall beside her. She, her face aflame with enthusiasm, her being full of the joy that comes from consciously mingling with the great pulsing life of the world, looked at Laurie with hope and exultation. But Laurie was possessed with a miserable heaviness that sharpened his features and had turned his boyish freshness to greyness of pallor.

She caught him by his sleeve. "Are you going to sign?"

He nodded without speaking.

"Oh! I am so glad. Isn't it glorious to be able to help?" and in her excitement she took his hand and wrung it hard.

But Laurie did not return the pressure. A deadly numbness seemed to weigh down his faculties. One thing only was clear—to sign the book and so commit himself irrevocably.

CHAPTER XVI

RENUNCIATION

“AND do you mean to tell me that you are going to give up everything for this craze? Why you must be mad, stark, staring mad.”

Laurie did not answer, only raised miserable eyes to his grandmother's face.

“Can't you speak? Or has your base ingratitude reached such a pitch that you cannot pay me common respect?”

“What more can I say?” His voice was weary and dull. “If you knew what it costs me.”

“What it costs you?” sneered she bitterly. “Don't cant. For the sake of some wild romantic notion you have got into your head, you determine to disappoint all my hopes and plans for you; for you, not for myself. Here I have earned an honest living for us both by sheer hard work, toiling and slaving, day in, day out; and my reward is—because some insolent agitator, who ought to be shut up in prison, comes and abuses a body of honest hard-working trades-people—that you leave me in my old age. For, mind, I won't have you hanging about here if you go against me. You will choose now; either give up this idiotic idea, or else start straight out of the place.”

“But, gran dear——”

“Stop that now; very dear I am to you. You think it nothing of making the few years that are left to me wretched, you base, ungrateful boy.”

Her stinging tones at last roused Laurie to resentment.

“I am not ungrateful, grandmother. Do you think it

is nothing to me to offend you? To have to give up ——” He stopped and choked. “You know well how I love you; how I feel towards you for all your goodness to me.” Again he paused, not able to proceed.

“Talk is cheap,” she sneered. “An ounce of deeds is worth a ton of talk. You deliberately choose to desert me in my old age.”

“Could you not let me stay near you, gran, and earn my living?” But he stopped, bewildered by the difficulties that he could see surrounded such a proposition.

“No. If you can be so vilely ungrateful, the only thing I shall ever again ask you to do for me, is to get out of my sight; go away where I may never see you again. But think well before you decide.” A softer emotion for a moment obliterated her wrath. “Laurie, you are the only being on earth left to me; will you desert me?”

He got up and came to where she was sitting and put his arms around her.

“Dearest gran,” he pleaded. “Forgive me; I have thought of it so long. I must do what is right.”

“Does that mean that you are finally determined to take your own way?” asked she, pushing him from her.

He bowed his head in silence.

“Then go, go. Never let me see your face again, unless you have returned to your senses. You can sleep in your room to-night, but after that, go. Of course it would be useless for me to offer you any of my public-house money; so fine a gentleman as you would not accept it. Your teetotal friends will no doubt supply you.”

Then as he stood, hesitating, she said furiously—

“Go, I tell you, or do you want to drive me from my own room? Go before I curse you! Go to your lecturer, or to your friends the Cassels; they have been at the bottom of it all. Go this moment, I tell you.” And her face was so awful to look upon, that he turned and obeyed her behest.

All that Sunday he had wandered in solitude by the seashore, for he felt he must be alone until he could have a

private conversation with his grandmother. During the day she had been told that her grandson had publicly signed the pledge the night before, but meeting him, had made no sign.

He had waited up until the house was closed, then following her to her bedroom had tried to tell her how, gradually, for years, there had been forming in his mind an abhorrence of the drink trade. How, little by little, he slowly and unwillingly had come to the conclusion that he must sever himself from it; that he could know no peace of mind, nor real happiness, until this was done; but that he had hesitated long, trying to put off a decision until he had gained his degree. The events of the past week had, however, driven him along the path of resolve; and what he had heard the night before at the temperance meeting, had at last decided him at all risks to no longer delay, but at once and for ever refuse to profit by the drink traffic.

At first Mrs. Johnstone had heard him coldly and contemptuously, not seeing to what his narrative was tending. But when he announced his intention of giving up his projected journey to England, and at once seeking some employment by which he could earn his living, her anger and offence knew no bounds.

There were points connected with the trade in alcohol which she had always disliked, but she looked on them as necessary evils, to be minimized as much as might be, but still not to be wholly helped. The daughter and wife of a publican, it seemed to her like madness that her grandson had come to look on the business with such contempt and loathing as he now plainly showed, and still more that this feeling should push him to the extreme step of renouncing his dearest aspirations.

Misled by her silence and construing it into at least partial inward agreement, he had been less guarded in his language than one with more experience might have been, and so cruelly hurt both her love and pride. He must, he told her, join with those who were working to do away with the

use of alcohol ; he repeated much of what he had heard at the lecture ; he pointed out that Mark and Tom might have been alive that night, and Harry a free man, had they lived in a community where the manufacture and sale of intoxicants were forbidden. He mentioned the names of people in the neighbourhood who led degraded, poverty-stricken lives, because they were in the habit of spending every farthing they could keep for the purpose in drink. He was, he said, not only determined not to profit by the extent of a penny more by what was made in this way, but also, he would never rest until he had saved sufficient to pay back to some charitable institution the sum his upkeep and education had cost.

Then the storm burst and raged ; until goaded by her pain and exasperated that he should refuse to obey her behest to dismiss such trash from his mind, she struck at him with bitter words, calling him fool, ingrate, unnatural. When at last she fully realized what his quiet, firm attitude meant, his fixed and unalterable decision nevermore to profit by the drink trade, she gave way to despairing fury.

Like one in a dream, Laurie stood in the verandah, and heard the big dining-room clock strike twelve as he entered his room. Leaning against the door he had closed, he looked slowly round the comfortable little apartment, filled everywhere with evidences of his grandmother's love. The sense of unreality grew on him when he went over to the bookshelves, and began taking down and fingering first one book, then another. Her birthday and Christmas presents ; his school-books, marked and dog-eared ; and his prizes. He turned over the leaves of one of the last, beautifully bound in crimson and gold, and recalled the chairman's congratulations as he handed over the pile of volumes ; and remembered how high his heart had beat as he listened to prognostications of the success and honour he would surely win at the University. As he had come down the steps from the platform, he had turned towards his grandmother, sitting at the side of the hall, and exchanged with her glances of pride and triumph.

The tears welled up in his eyes. "Poor grandmother," he thought as he replaced the book on the shelf. "Poor, poor grandmother. How I have disappointed her. It seems cruel, cruel, that I should be forced to do it. I wish I had not said anything about paying back that money ; it was cruel of me, though I did not mean it so ; but I forgot." Then, as the realization of what he was renouncing swept over him, he sat down on the side of the bed, and bowed his face upon his hands.

He sat there until the clock, striking one, reminded him that he must come to some resolution as to the immediate shaping of his course. It was due to his grandmother to remove himself out of her way, according to her expressed desire. He would go into the back blocks, at least for a time. A strong healthy youth, with brains and willing hands, could surely find plenty of work ; he would try and forget all that was behind and start afresh.

So resolving, a rush of vigour scattered the weird dream-like feeling, and sent him hunting among his well-furnished wardrobe for the plainest, strongest suit he possessed. A felt hat, and a pair of thick soled boots that he had worn lately on a fishing excursion, were also placed ready. Then he took down from the wall a tiny little pen and ink drawing of his grandmother's face that a drunken wandering artist had executed in return for a day or two's board and beer, and, wrapping it up with a pen-wiper Anne had made for him, put them in the breast pocket of the coat. Lastly he knelt down beside his bed, and perhaps for the first time in his life really offered the prayer that springs from human need and the assurance of a hearing Presence. Religion had seemed to him, through his grandmother's illustration of it, an imaginary thing, an attempted respectability, often tolerating vice. Her church-going and church gifts had often of late moved him inwardly to cynical mirth. Even the counter example of Mr. and Mrs. Cassels had not been able to obliterate the first graving of his mind.

He rose from his knees somewhat soothed, and directly

he was undressed and in bed, fell fast asleep, not waking until he heard Keziah moving about in the next room. He had just finished dressing when she knocked at his door.

"Lord, save us, Laurie; wot be it all about?" she said excitedly as she entered. "Yer granma called me jist now, and give me this fer yer. 'Tell 'im,' she says, 'I don't leave me room till 'e's gone, unless 'e's thought better on 'is folly, an' giv' 'im this 'ere; tell 'im 'e kin sen' it back, ef 'e fines 'e doan want it. An' ef e' is in want 'e can sen' ter me fer more. I bain't want 'im ter starve, and 'e mus' 'ave 'is brekfus; but I won't see 'im, an' I won't come hout o'me room till 'e be gone' Wot does it all mean, Laurie? Sakes alive!"

His first impulse was to refuse the five-pound cheque; but he reflected that the taking of it would commit him to nothing, as he could return it later; and the knowledge that he possessed the means of present subsistence would relieve his grandmother's mind.

Keziah's grief and perplexity when he tried to explain the position overwhelmed her.

"It be too bad on yer, Laurie, to go away an' leave yer poor granma, jist becos yer's a teetotal. I allers said ther warn't no blessin' in this 'ere drink trade. I looked ter it that yer might tak' ter drink yersel', or mayhap be took sick an' die; but this as yer is a doin' is wuss; an' I never counted on un. It bain't natrel fer yer ter giv' hup bein' a genelum doctor, like yer pa, an' go about wi' leathers hunder yer knees, a crackin' stones, fer that's wot it'll come to. I counts as these ere teetotal folkse is hin ther right o' hit; but yer carries it too far. If yer lives among crows, yer's jist got to caw wi' 'em, or un don't think nothin' on yer. Don't ee do it, Laurie; don't ee go away from us two poor lone women. Why didn't yer go to Hengland fust, an' jine them there teetotal folkse there? Then yer granma oodn't a known nothin' about it; an' wen yer come back, like as not, she'd a bin out o' ther public then. Go an mak' it hup wi' 'er, do. Laurie, do," and Keziah, sobbing, put her arms around him.

When she found, at last, that all her persuasion was in vain, she went away, still crying, to get his breakfast, and Laurie feeling that he could not go without making an effort to bid his grandmother "good-bye," knocked at the closed door, but no sign or sound was vouchsafed in answer; so he went back, and ate what breakfast he could. Once more he knocked at the closed door, and implored her to let him in, or at least speak, but the result was the same as before. He was obliged to leave his childhood's home with poor Keziah's tears and objurgations for farewell, and a packet of sandwiches—the most he would take of all the things with which she would have loaded him—in his pocket.

He directed his steps first to the little shop; for he could not go away without bidding the Cassels good-bye.

"God bless you," said Mr. Cassels, wringing Laurie's hand. "And He will too. Lying here I have had much time to think, and observe the stream of life as it runs by me; and I can see plainly that the only thing that in the end brings happiness, even in this world, is to follow, at all costs, the promptings of conscience. No single sacrifice made for right ever goes unrewarded. I do not mean that the payment will be in the coin of worldly prosperity; that may or may not happen; but in peace of mind, in all that goes to raise one's nature, the reward of right doing is great; and I am sure that you are right, though few of your age would have had strength to take such a step."

Mrs. Cassels said little; but her eyes showed what she felt, and the comprehending sympathy of both fell like balm on the boy's sore wounded heart. He had been afraid that they would think him too quixotic, and it was a relief to find the judgment quite otherwise. Of Anne he had entertained no doubt; he understood how her romantic, idealizing nature would view his decision; but he saw that her exultation in his courage shut out from her calculations what the cost he was paying really meant to him.

"If you must go, Laurie, I will get my hat, and walk a little way with you. May I, mother?"

Mrs. Cassels assented, and then, with Jessie and Walter, stood at the door watching them out of sight.

"Something will turn up, never fear," said Anne hopefully. "You will soon make money enough to take you home to England, and then when you are a doctor you can do so much good by showing people that alcohol is very seldom needed as a medicine even, and that it is really injurious as a beverage. Oh! how I wish I were going to be a man too; we might have worked together then."

"Why could we not as it is? I believe that if girls and women banded together to overthrow the traffic they could do it even better than men."

"Do you?" she said astonished.

"Yes, I do. Why, it was your question that Sunday you were afraid of the drunken man that set me thinking."

"What question?"

"You asked if I did not hate to live in a public-house."

"Did I? And did that make you think about it? How queer!"

She was silent, meditating. "Then I really have done something already," and she looked up with eyes sparkling. "Who knows but when I am grown up I might persuade others—that would be lovely. Mother says that women are beginning to do more outside their homes than they used, and that she can see a great difference since she was a girl. But women can't go about lecturing; that is what I should like to do."

When they had gone over a mile Anne stopped. "I must go back now, or I shall be late for school. Oh! I almost wish that I were going too. It must be grand to be setting out to seek your fortune, with all the world before you."

Laurie looked at her without speaking, but his pale face took on a rigid look that forced itself on Anne's consciousness, preoccupied as it had been with romantic high-strung thoughts.

“Poor old boy,” she said remorsefully, “I am forgetting that you have to go away alone, and I ought not to have forgotten, for I was so miserable myself that time I went to the Mitchells.”

“Yes,” said Laurie in a choking voice, “it will be lonely.”

“But you will write to us, and we will write to you—piles of letters, all of us,” she went on rapidly, her high spirits falling before the miserable look in his eyes. “And the time will soon pass. Look at Hugh, he was away nearly a year and it seemed no time.”

“I think to Hugh it—did not seem so short.”

“Well no, perhaps not. But a year soon passes, and you ought to come back in a year; and I dare say by that time your grandmother will be ready to make it up with you.”

Anne’s words rushed on, trying to comfort, for she was frightened by the stony look in the boy’s face.

“Good-bye, I must go,” and as Laurie released her hands, saying with stiff lips “Good-bye,” her pity and compassion made her do a wonderful thing; she threw her arms around his neck and drawing his head down, kissed him on the forehead.

CHAPTER XVII

A SURPRISE

It was half-past seven in the morning, and the red-coated postman had just got out of the mail cart, and was coming up the street. Anne, who was setting the shop in order, kept going to the door to mark his progress. "Talking to the butcher, of course, he always gossips there; he won't get past until I have finished dusting the pickle bottles." In about a minute she went out again.

"Just what I thought, only coming away now and going across to the *Red Dragon*; he won't hurry from there, of course, he ought to be fined, the old gossip. Not that I need bother. I might as well give up the idea that the editor will ever write; and here I am, seventeen to-day, and nothing done yet." She flicked her duster impatiently round the tea chests. "It seems to me I shall never do anything worth talking of. If the Government would only start the kindergarten school and give it to me, but they keep putting it off." She went to the door again, shaking out her duster.

"Why, he is coming up this side," and her face flushed and her heart began to beat. Could it be that he was bringing anything for her at last? No, she would not expect it, and then she would not be disappointed.

When a tiny child of eight or nine, she had been used to scribble rhymes; but always secretly, not even showing them to her mother. There was no reason that she could define for this secrecy, only a shrinking from letting another guess at the romance and indefinite yearning for she knew not what, that made up so much of her nature.

When she was about thirteen, the Colony had been grief stricken at the death from thirst and starvation in the interior of the Continent, of a little band of explorers. Anne, who had shed bitter tears over their fate, wrote a poem on it and sent the manuscript to one of the daily papers, though finding twopence to pay for the stamp had exercised her greatly. A day or two afterwards in the notices to correspondents A. C. was informed that though the poem was not without merit, it was scarcely up to the standard of their columns. Once more she tried, a year later, but with the same result. The editor had no conception of his contributor's youth, or he might have decided differently; while she, taking little notice of the words of commendation, was discouraged because of his refusal to publish, and gave up the hope of blossoming into a gifted writer, and left off collecting scraps of pencil and paper with which to jot down her thoughts.

During the past year, however, the old passion had revived; and about four months ago she had dispatched to the *Wallet*, an Adelaide monthly magazine just started, some specimen chapters of a story and also a short poem. Mr. Marshall, who took the magazine, used to lend it to the Cassels; and in the next issue he brought "Blue Flax" had been asked to send his address. Of course Blue Flax, filled with visions of success, complied; but month after month had passed without further notice from the editor, though she had been constantly on the look-out for the postman, until the very sight of his red coat brought mingled pain and eagerness.

Perhaps this morning he was at last bringing her a letter. She went outside and began carefully polishing one of the window panes that had been smeared by a sticky hand. Red coat stopped to speak to some children and Anne commenced on the next pane, though it needed no rubbing. Red coat came on, and in spite of her effort at self-control, she dropped her duster on the ground and turned expectantly. Alas! he merely touched his cap, said "Good-morning" in a brisk tone, and crossed

to where Catherine Muir displayed her sign "Dressmaking done here," between muslin curtains.

There was a constriction at her throat as she went inside. "I can't be any good at writing after all, and yet I am sure I can write better than ever so many of the people whose stories are in the *Wallet*."

A lanky youth, carrying a gun and with a dog running on three legs following at his heels, passed and she darted out after him. He possessed an extremely long nose, thin and drooping, an habitually melancholy expression, and a drawl.

"Zeke, when are you coming to dig the new patch for lucerne?"

Zeke pushed up his old cap, and scratched his head. "Well, Miss Cassels, I dunno'; it all depends on 'ow things goes."

"But why can't you begin this morning? It is a week since I told you about it."

Zeke again scratched his head. "I muss go an shoot some parrits fer a pie fer mother."

"You could shoot parrots after you had finished our digging. Besides, last time I saw you, you said parrot pie had given you indigestion."

"So it does fer sure, Miss Cassels. Mother says 'ot parrit pie is undigestful, but I don't take no notice, I jest eats away."

"Will you come to-morrow?"

"I dunno; it all depends on 'ow things goes."

"Well, mind things bring you in the direction of our new patch. What is the matter with your dog? Is he lame that he holds up one leg all the time?"

"No, Miss Cassels, he ony walks like that to pass the time. I'll see 'ow things goes ter-morrow."

At the breakfast table she had managed to banish all sign of her disappointment, and seemed in the highest spirits, admiring anew the little birthday gifts she had found on her pillow; a pair of gloves, a purse, a comb, a ribbon for her neck. She was changing her morning

dress for her school one when Jessie came rushing into the room breathless, to say their mother wanted her in the shop; and that there was a van outside with three men in it bringing a piano.

Mrs. Cassels, looking puzzled and excited, was talking to a young man, who had informed her he was a clerk from the music warehouse. She turned eagerly to Anne.

"Here is a strange thing; there is a piano addressed to you in the van outside. Surely there must be some mistake. I scarcely know what to do about it. Perhaps I had better go and consult your father while this gentleman lets you know what he has just told me."

The clerk said that arrangements had been made with his principal; that they had been told to forward the piano, and merely say that a full explanation would be found when the instrument was unlocked.

Mrs. Cassels returning, it was decided to have the case brought in, and the clerk proceeded, with the help of the other men, to execute the order. When the case was unpacked, a beautiful little piano, perfectly plain, but exquisitely made, and a parcel which when opened proved to be music, was revealed. The piano was placed in position in the sitting-room, and the long slender key handed to Anne. She, pale with intense feeling, inserted the key in the lock, turned it and raised the lid. On the ivory lay a note addressed to her, which was at once seen to be in her great-aunt's handwriting.

"DEAR NIECE," it ran, "I have been considerably interested in the account our mutual friend, Mrs. Hall, has lately given me of your employment and studies. The Rev. Mr. Binney told me some years ago that you greatly resembled me in feature, and I think you must have inherited my musical tastes and perseverance, or you would not have contrived to pursue the study of music under such disadvantageous circumstances. During the last year, I have become associated with Mrs. Hall in philanthropic work, and although she belongs to a communion of which

I do not approve, yet I have learned to trust her judgment, and her high opinion of you has decided me to send you a birthday present which may assist, if you make good use of it, in earning an honest living, better than the wooden keyboard you so ingeniously constructed.

“Fare you well,

“ANNE CASSELS.”

The men had gone and the owner of the piano danced and pirouetted round the room, stopping every now and then to finger and admire afresh, the ivory keys, the polished walnut case, the brass candlesticks and handles and the beautiful carving. Jessie and Walter were as excited as herself, and Mr. and Mrs. Cassels scarcely less so.”

“Isn’t Aunt Anne a dear, after all? I shall soon learn now.”

“But how about lessons?” inquired her father when she had ceased her dancing, and was turning over the portfolio of music.

“I know what,” she answered, “the mother of those two last children who came to school said she wanted them taught music, and asked if I knew any one who would do it, and not charge much, as they are so young. I will go this very day and explain to her and see if she would let me try; and then what she pays for the two would be enough to provide for my lessons. I think I can persuade her, for they are only little tots; and of course I could soon get far ahead of them. Miss Smith, the music teacher who lives next the school-house, only charges a guinea a quarter, and if Eliza and Mary’s mother paid ten-and-six for each, I should be set up.”

Father and mother smiled at her and at each other. “You are a resourceful child. Your mother might give you some hints too, though piano-playing was not her forte, was it, Emily?”

“No, indeed. I hated the hours they kept me strumming; but every girl was supposed to learn music whether

she had a taste for it or not. You must go now, dear. You will be late for school as it is. Here is your luncheon."

So Anne, taking the little basket and hastily donning hat and gloves, reluctantly tore herself away.

The day passed busily, though far less quickly than usual. The school had outgrown its original quarters, and was now held some streets away, in what had once been a tiny Baptist Church, built during the first decade of the Colony, but whose congregation had long migrated to a more suitable building. There were now about fifty pupils on the roll, giving an average attendance of over forty, and it took all Anne's managing powers to work the different classes.

During the dinner hour she interviewed with satisfactory results Eliza and Mary's mother ; and in the afternoon on her way home, called to see Miss Smith. The first page of the instruction book sent by her great aunt had been conned over and fingered at several spare moments ; and when the music mistress expressed her willingness to take another pupil, she likewise agreed to give her a lesson on the spot. So Anne sat down to the old fashioned piano that had belonged in England to Miss Smith's mother, and few would have understood the rapture that thrilled her whole being when the yellow keys gave out sweet tinkling sounds at the touch of fingers that had hitherto had only the irresponsive wooden board to press.

"One, two, three, four, five. One, two, three, four, five," counted Miss Smith with tapping pencil. Were there ever such heavenly sounds ? And then when hurrying home, she whirled into the sitting-room, and on her very, very own piano repeated to her admiring family the lesson she had just received. "One, two, three, four, five," singing the numbers ; and then began picking out little bits of tunes, thanks to her previous studies interpreting quite correctly ; the delight of it, the rapture of it all was inexpressible.

That night when she and Jessie went to their room she said, " This is the happiest birthday I have had, since the

one Laurie gave me the workbox and we had that lovely picnic before father was taken ill."

She opened her little workbox, looking at it dreamily as she leant her elbow on the dressing-table.

"I wonder if Laurie remembers this is your birthday; how pleased he would be if he knew of the piano. It was his birthday last month and he was nineteen. I wonder if we shall ever see him again."

"Of course we shall," replied Anne, rousing herself with an effort. "In his last letter to mother he said that droving paid well and he had been making some good deals in cattle. But I suppose it will take a long time before he saves enough money to pay for going home and getting his medical training."

"I don't believe he will ever save enough for that; he was silly not to let Mrs. Johnstone do it for him."

"I think it was grand, noble of him," and her eyes glowed. "Besides, he was miserable, seeing the way his grandmother made so much of her money; and he could have had no peace of mind if he had refused to listen to the voice of his conscience."

"I don't see that letting his grandmother finish his education need have troubled him much. And look at her now, living in that lovely house at the seaside and driving that pony carriage with those dear little ponies in it, and a coachman in livery. And there are the Mitchells; they have set up a carriage since they came back from England, and we saw their names in the lists of the last Government House ball. It makes me almost wish that we had had a great-grandfather or great-grandmother who kept a public-house or a brewery. Nobody would know now and we should have the money." And Jessie shook out her dress with an impatient movement and hung it behind the door.

"For shame, Jessie. To hear you talk any one would imagine that money was the chief end of life."

"Well, you couldn't have had your piano without it, and it's horrid not to get enough. And though people talk of life being short, yet sixty or seventy years seem an awful

time to be always screwing and scraping. And in eternity, from all I can make out, there won't be any money wanted—everything provided—so as this is the only place we can get it and spend it, we may as well get all we can," she ended flippantly.

"Honestly, my dear, and honourably."

"I don't see but a brewery is honest enough. There is no harm in beer for people who don't get tipsy. Of course a public house is low, but a brewery is swellish."

"You know perfectly well that is not the question. It is whether people are justified in making money out of what degrades others, not whether some people can take alcohol and keep sober, or whether it is low to sell a glass of beer, but 'swellish' as you call it, to sell a cask," answered Anne severely.

Jessie finished plaiting her thick, fair hair, then discreetly changed the subject.

"I wonder where Hugh is now, and if he remembers that this is your birthday. It is to be hoped he has not run away from this last ship."

Anne sighed. "It is to be hoped not. He will never succeed at anything if he keeps changing. Throwing away that first good chance through a quarrel with the mate; then running away, and now wanting to give up the sea altogether. But don't let us talk of disagreeable things. I have had such a lovely day, and we must not spoil it. First there were the pretty things you all gave me; then that beautiful piano and just the right sort of instruction book and music; then getting the two music pupils and beginning my own lessons. I am an awfully lucky girl. I must have a practice before breakfast, I wish it were time now."

"You had better get undressed and come into bed with me so that we can have a good talk," and Jessie, having said her prayers as quickly as possible, curled herself under the bed-clothes. "Hurry up, or you will sleep too late in the morning, and not have time for your practice; besides you are burning a lot of candle. Do you remember

when we nearly always undressed in the dark? And that night when the cat got under the bed and we thought it was a robber? And there we lay, afraid to move, until she gave a mew. After that mother always brought a light to let us see under the bed before we undressed."

Anne laughed. "It was a dreadful fright, worse than when you fell into the lake, for then we had not time to realize the danger properly."

Jessie's blue eyes peered over the bedclothes at her sister kneeling a long time beside the bed, a quite unnecessary time she thought impatiently. When at last the light was blown out, Jessie rubbing her cheek against Anne's arm, said—

"Wouldn't it be grand if Aunt Anne left you her money? I believe she will."

"I hate speculating about other people's property. It's mean and grovelling, looking out for dead people's shoes. Besides, it's ever so much nicer to make one's way oneself. That is what I would choose, and I intend to do it too."

"But if she did give it to you?"

"I don't want to think about such an unlikely thing. If she did right she would leave some of it to father."

"I am sure he thinks there is very little chance of that. Just for fun say what you would do if you had a lot of money," urged Jessie.

"Buy a bath-chair for father, and a little low pony carriage that he could get into easily, and have a man to wait on him and help him about, and——"

"Oh, of course, I know you would do everything for him and all of us; but I mean what would you like to do for yourself?"

"Go to England and Italy and study singing and music and painting. There are heaps and heaps of things it would be lovely to learn. Languages now, fancy travelling through France and Germany and Italy, learning all sorts of things as you went along; climbing the Alps, standing on the very place where Paul preached; seeing the very work of Michael Angelo and Raphael; walking through the

streets that Dante and Beatrice trod ; looking on the spot where Madam Roland died ; hearing all the great oratorios and operas ; listening to famous lecturers and preachers——”

“ I wouldn’t care much for most of those things,” interrupted Jessie. “ I should have lovely dresses and jewellery and go to parties, and ride on horseback, and have a carriage, of course. Yes, and a big garden with gardeners to look after it. But learning things, I can’t think how you can like to be always learning. I never want to learn anything except how to do my hair like a grown-up, and some sorts of wool-work are nice.” She gave a prodigious yawn, turned over and fell asleep.

Long after, Anne lay awake. Thought was too vivid, happiness too intense to allow themselves to be put to sleep. The wonderful birthday gift had made possible so much that the active brain arranged and re-arranged. She could never be a brilliant pianist—it was too late to hope for that ; the closest application could not make up for the pliancy of childish fingers ; but still she could give and derive much pleasure by becoming even a very moderate performer, and also it would prove a considerable augmentation of income.

Long ago she had come to the conclusion that her love of form and colour did not betoken that she possessed the true spark of genius ; otherwise the flame would have shot upward in spite of obstacles. But there was her voice, and the gift of expressing herself in writing ; were either of these the means by which she was to achieve the distinction, and do the good on which she had set her mind ?

Her voice was remarkable—a full rich contralto—but needed more cultivation than the singing class and choir practice could give. Her talent for writing, she was convinced, showed a quality higher than that of the ordinary scribbler ; and her tremendous tenacity sustained her in this conviction in spite of all discouragement. The piano made the better cultivation of her voice possible. She would devote herself to that, and for the present let the

writing go. Perhaps her destiny was to be a famous singer ; perhaps before she died her pen would make her name renowned.

Before she died. It all came to that ; all paths led to the same final goal ; and what then ? The old questions that had slept for years, slept but dreaming sometimes, suddenly woke right up. Her eager busy life had not, of late, left her much space for meditation on subjective matters, and they had passed into abeyance ; but the cry, " Whence came I ? What am I ? Whither do I go ? " now silenced and stilled all other voices.

She had been brought up by a father and mother whose simple faith rested securely on the gospel story. She had gone to church and Sunday School regularly and enjoyed attending them. She had knelt at prayer night and morning, but always there had been a craving for some confirmation of the spirit life, other than that of Holy Writ, and lacking that confirmation, actual living belief seemed to her impossible.

Equally impossible was it to think that this vigorous being of hers with its thousand hopes and fears could ever be quenched in darkness and forgetfulness. She recalled what she had learned in her multifarious reading, that science taught the impossibility of destroying one atom of matter ; it might change, but it could never disappear from the universe. That mysterious something which thinks and remembers, and loves and hates and adores, is certainly far, far above matter. It is distinct from the body, for lo ! the dead body may lie before us while what we call the spirit has left it. Could the lower survive and the higher be utterly destroyed ? Surely not. Where then had it fled ? And why did it not come to solve our agonized doubts and fears ?

Her father and Mr. Marshall had told her that philosophy had asked this question for ages upon ages, and had never found an answer. How then could she wrest from the darkness the secret it held ?

Perhaps the New Testament story of the Son of God

coming to earth in order that He might illumine all life by answering this very question, and revealing how mortality was linked with immortality was indeed the very truth ; and as she grew older there might grow in her mind and heart a living belief in its reality.

She determined to ponder no longer on these insoluble problems ; but resolutely turn her thoughts to mundane affairs. Resolving thus she fell asleep, and with a smile on her lips dreamt that she was in the Town Hall singing before a crowded audience, to an accompaniment brilliantly played by herself on her very own piano.

CHAPTER XVIII

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT

“AND so Laurie went back to the far North yesterday, did he? Only a week in Adelaide after four years’ absence. How well he seems to be getting on; John and I were pleased to see him; he has grown into such a fine, handsome young man; so sun-burned and healthy looking.”

“Yes, he did not stay longer, partly on his grandmother’s account, for as she refused to see him it would have been painful meeting her by accident, as he might have done had he remained. He thinks it only right, after all she did for him, to observe her wishes in this respect, as he was compelled to oppose them in matters of principle. Besides, prolonging his visit would have been losing a chance of getting some cattle he was particularly anxious to buy.”

Anne was calling on Mrs. Marshall, who had not been well of late, but who was now sitting up, knitting in hand, her slim little figure leaning back against the cushions.

“Did he hear you sing and play, dear? It is so long since I saw you, that you must have heaps of news to tell me. Ah! here comes the tea; pour it out, like a love,” and the little lady smiled genially at her visitor.

Anne always enjoyed pouring out the freshly-made fragrant beverage from the quaint, old silver teapot; and the delicate china and old-fashioned teaspoons gave, she declared, a delightful flavour such as that drunk from thick delf did not know.

“Laurie would be charmed with your musical acquirements; it is a pity he could not hear you sing at a concert,”

resumed Mrs. Marshall. "Your advance has been something wonderful. Let me see, it is about two years, is it not, since you got your piano?"

Anne answered in the affirmative.

"And the appointment is not settled yet, I suppose?"

"No, I am hoping to hear every day—hoping and fearing. It would be such a disappointment now, if some one else obtained it. I heard that the committee were very pleased with me, and that they thought my voice would be a great advantage; but then they may have been better pleased with one of the other twelve candidates, who were selected from the original forty-seven applicants."

"It must have been a trial for you to stand up and give special lessons before them all; and in a strange school, too."

Just then Mr. Marshall came in. He went and sat down by his wife's chair, and put his hand on hers as he asked her how she had been during the afternoon. He drank hastily the cup of tea Anne gave him, saying he could only stay a minute as he was very busy. His wife looked after him with loving eyes.

"I hope, dear, when you marry, you will get a husband just like John. You laugh. I have been a girl and know what you are thinking about, grey hairs and bald heads. But when I say like John, I mean, with a faithful heart and true nature like his. You young ones imagine you have a monopoly of love, and are apt to fancy we old people are long past it. No greater mistake, my lassie. Young love can never have the strength of that which has weathered the storms of thirty or forty years of life together; that is bound indissolubly by a thousand ties and memories of self-sacrifice, of loving thoughts and deeds."

Anne's eyes were moist. "I know, I know, I see it in my father and mother."

"John has never once failed me since we were married. Ah! what an indescribable blessing that is for an old wife to sit and think of; it keeps her heart always young. So

often men seem to imagine that when they and their wives grow old, all the little lover-like attentions of which they were once so lavish are no longer necessary ; that the woman ought to be assured of her husband's love and need no proof of it beyond having her bodily wants provided for. Many an old wife's heart is starved for lack of her husband's affection, or at least of its outward signs. As one grows old the confidence and self-satisfaction that accompanies youth, and which makes it natural to expect love for love, is lost ; and when the bloom has gone from the cheek, and the hair has lost its sheen, while wrinkles and greyness usurp their place, the old wife is apt to grow distrustful of her power over the heart that is all the world to her."

She knitted awhile in silence and Anne waited, for she knew her old friend's habit of half talking, half thinking aloud.

"Once that happened to me, only once. I had just awakened to the fact that youth had gone from me for ever ; and that cannot fail, my dear, to be a sad epoch in a woman's life, to know that the attractions which have given pleasure to those she loves have vanished." She sighed and looked dreamily before her.

"Well, one day a pretty little neighbour was visiting us, and all at once as I watched John laughing and jesting with her, there came to me a miserable feeling that he might do as many another man has done, neglect his old wife for the sake of a fair young face. It would not be, I said to myself, so much the effect as the cause that would break my heart ; for there must first be a chilling of his warm devoted love, before he could transfer to another the nameless little evidences of affection that had always been mine.

"These thoughts flew to and fro in my head, while my embroidery needle flew in and out of my work, and my tongue at times joined in the conversation. John offered to show our neighbour an improvement he had lately made in the garden, and they both rose. I sat still, the new bitter

thoughts telling me that John might be better pleased by my remaining behind ; but as he held the door open for our guest he turned to me—‘ Come on, little woman,’ he said, ‘ you need not be so industrious surely.’

“ An hour later, when we stood at the gate through which our visitor had just driven, he put his arm round my waist. ‘ Bessie,’ he asked, “ what made you so quiet this afternoon ? ’

“ At first I was ashamed to tell him. When I did, he looked at me reproachfully, ‘ Too bad, little woman,’ he said. “ You have known all these years that every fibre of my heart is yours, as I believed that yours was mine ; but now that I see what tremendous value you place on appearance, I shall be forced to remember how few and grey the hairs of my head are becoming ; that I am getting round-shouldered and bent, and am sometimes inclined to be careless in my dress ; that probably you prefer to talk to men of raven locks and straight backs, men who wear patent leather shoes, and irreproachable coats ; and consequently that your old husband’s devotion does not count for much, that——’

“ But here I interrupted him,” and the little lady wiped away two or three tears. “ Ah ! my dear lassie, it is not every man who has my John’s loving insight and thoughtfulness. I only know of one young man who resembles him at all in those characteristics ; the same large heart, the same solicitous thought for others. Fancy his going to see that wretched Harry in the Stockade ! If ever Laurie asks you to marry him, take him and be thankful for the chance, for he is a man in ten thousand.”

“ Laurie ! ” Anne’s cheeks flushed crimson at her old friend’s directness. She was not the type of girl who talks much of love and marriage, and she possessed the virginal freshness which shrinks from treading lightly on holy ground. “ Laurie ! I could never marry him ; he is like a brother to me, and in that way I am fond of him, but in no other, nor could be. Besides,” she finished laughing, “ he has no thought of that sort ; he will be married to

his profession when he attains it. How do you like your new minister ? ”

Mrs. Marshall was inwardly amused at the hasty change of subject.

“ A fine man, my dear ; one who goes about as his Master did among the sick and poor. He has been to see us several times ; but I think more for John’s sake than mine. He evidently imagines that an honest sceptic has a poor chance in the life to come, and is worried over it.”

Anne had often wondered about Mrs. Marshall’s feelings concerning her husband’s religious views, and now she asked hesitatingly. “ But you—do you worry over it ? ”

“ Not now. When we were first married I did. How I used to long that we might worship in the same spirit, kneel for the same communion, one in that as in all other things. But as we went along and I saw how much higher his ideals were than those of most other men, how he strove to live up to them, and how truly Christlike was his life—always ready to sacrifice his own pleasure and interest for the sake of others’ good—I ceased to trouble about his views ; remembering that God gave him the sceptical cast of mind he has ; and that He will never require from one of us what He has given no power to render.”

“ Then you do not think it matters what people believe as long as they are good ? ”

Mrs. Marshall smiled thoughtfully. “ Do you remember what our Lord said to Thomas ? ‘ Blessed are they who have not seen, and *yet* have believed.’ People sometimes talk of those words as if they were a condemnation of doubt ; but I feel certain that Jesus was but pointing out a fact that may be verified any day ; that doubt of the reality of a living Christ ; doubt of the immortality of those walking about in mortal form, must needs bring sadness and pain to those at any rate who live in a Christian land ; while faith in the risen Christ, and in life made glorious after death, must of necessity bring joy and blessedness, and peace of mind almost beyond belief.”

She stopped for a minute or two, leaning her chin on her hand and looking down.

"Now to me it is certain that John and I will by and by meet where we shall be no more separated ; but he, —he has no such certainty. The unco orthodox would, of course, say that because here he has missed the happiness which springs from a strong belief in immortality, therefore he must, because of this loss, be punished everlastingly. It puzzles me how people can think of a loving, good God as stupidly cruel and vindictive."

She took up her knitting again, and caught up a fallen stitch.

"I used to long painfully that John might be allowed to believe in this world, instead of having to wait ; but I do not now, for how can I tell in my ignorance what is the best treatment for his soul ? Only the God who made him can do that."

"Do you think we should pray for temporal blessing or only spiritual ones ?" asked Anne, after she had in silence watched for a few minutes the busy fingers.

"I do not see, lassie, how the two can be separated. 'Whatsoever things ye need, ask.' There is the plain direction."

"But people often ask and receive no answer."

"There you mistake ; the answer has come right enough, but in the shape of a denial. When the wee bairn asks its mother for the lighted candle, she answers what is best for his welfare, a refusal, but she also takes note of his heart's desire, and gives him something better fitted to his capabilities and necessities."

"Then what is the use of asking ?"

"Some one has said, 'primarily to train ourselves in habits of communion with our Father in Heaven,' but also that we may often receive that for which we ask. In this way each soul may gather up its own experiences of the spirit life. When as a girl I first joined the church, the difficulty of understanding the passage, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the

children of God ' greatly troubled me ; for I felt that I had no such witness. So at last I went to our old minister, and this is what he said to me, ' You are only now beginning your Christian life. As you proceed, spiritual experiences will multiply, and speak to you with no uncertain voice ; and if you listen you will find the Spirit bearing witness with your spirit. He that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine ; ' doeth, you notice, not talketh about it.

" So I have found it ; and I will tell you of one such experience. Just before we left Scotland I had a serious illness, caused by an internal complaint. It was necessary for the doctor or nurse to use an instrument at regular intervals, and the operation caused me terrible pain. On the twelfth day the fever ran very high, and I was mostly in a half delirious state ; but in one of the fully conscious intervals I remembered that the time was at hand for the periodic visitation, and it seemed to me as if I could not bear it. Then all at once it flashed across my mind that I had not asked God to relieve me. For days, as far as I could remember, I had not prayed. ' How stupid of me,' I said aloud, with a half laugh at my foolishness, ' I have only to ask Him and here I am suffering unnecessarily,' and I prayed aloud, ' Oh God ! make me better, don't let them have to use the instrument again.' Like lightning the answer came. I felt that instant the trouble removed, and it occasioned me no astonishment, in my then state of mind, it only seemed the most natural sequence to my prayer. As the nurse came in at the door with the appliances in her hand, I said, smiling and looking as she declared, a new creature. ' You can take it away, nurse, I do not need it.' After that experience, can you imagine it possible for me to think that there is no spirit land ; no one ready to hear, and mighty to save ; only a blank to which we utter futile cries ? "

" But why are such answers so infrequent ? "

" Ah ! that it is impossible to say ; but probably, I think, through some defect of our own. We have not learned the way to ask, or we are not sufficiently in earnest. In my own case reason and imagination were asleep, and

in the silence spiritual voices became audible. Neither before nor since have I felt a similar intensity of faith. It was just like a child in the dark, waking frightened, and absolutely certain of protection and comfort, reaching out its hand to the loving mother beside it, whose murmurs of tenderness were whispered in its ears."

After feeding the pigeons and admiring the flowers, Anne took her leave and walked briskly down the street, noting that a building was going up on one of the vacant lots and that some unpaved parts of the footways were being laid. She entered a bookseller's shop and was inquiring the price of exercise-books that she needed for some of her pupils, when an elderly gentleman, who had been standing at the opposite counter, glanced round, and at once walked to her.

"Miss Cassels, I believe," he said, raising his hat.

Anne looked surprisedly at him, and answered "Yes."

"I wish to be the first to congratulate you on your appointment. My name is Dewhurst, and I have just come from a sitting of the Council of Education where your appointment as mistress of the Kindergarten School was decided on. Allow me to congratulate you."

"Really and truly?" gasped Anne, shaking hands with the genial kind-hearted Inspector Dewhurst, of whom she had frequently heard, but never before met. "It seems too good to be true."

"Really and truly," returned he, smiling into her excited eyes. "The Selection Committee were unanimous in their choice, and considered there was no one at all near you. You were pointed out to me the other day in the street, so I recognized you at once."

"Thank you so much; it was so good of you to tell me," and forgetting all about the exercise-books on the counter and the shopman waiting to serve her, she almost flew out of the shop. It was as much as she could do to keep from running along the street, and when the cab-stand came in view she determined on the unwonted luxury of riding; the

driver who hailed her agreeing to go to the corner of the Terrace for sixpence.

A little later Mr. and Mrs. Cassels heard footsteps racing round the side of the house, and Anne burst in upon them, her hat tilted over one ear, her cheeks like damask roses and her eyes sparkling like gems.

"I've got it, I've got it. Oh! mother, oh! father, I've got it," and she spun round the room on the tips of her toes.

"Got what?" said her mother, clasping her hands nervously, "not the appointment?"

"Yes, indeed, the appointment! That dear old Inspector Dewhurst has just told me," and stopping in her gyrations, she hugged father and mother and then Jessie and Walter; the two latter from their vantage point of the shed roof and ladder where they had been nailing up vines, had beheld their sister flying over the cathedral acre and lucerne paddock, and at once hurried in to learn the reason of such undignified haste.

"A hundred and twenty a year think of that! Ten pounds a month, nearly two pounds, five shillings a week; and in six months' time to be increased to one hundred and fifty per annum; and probably in twelve months to two hundred pounds a year; two hundred pounds!"

"And the old lady teacher from England, who called you a chit of a girl; and the other who, when you wanted to be friendly and asked if she felt nervous, said certificated teachers need not be nervous, meaning to give you a knock, as you hadn't one—a certificate, I mean—not a knock. They are left out in the cold and you appointed mistress. Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" echoed Walter, clinging round Anne's waist, and nearly knocking her down, besides trampling on her toes. But she liked it, and joined in the hurrahs, whirling Walter round the room until both were out of breath, then coming to a standstill beside her mother.

"I am sorry for the other poor things, but every one could not get it; and I don't think any one wanted it worse than we do; and now at last we can give up the old

shop and go back to our dear little white cottage on the Terrace. I did not tell you, for fear of being disappointed, but a week ago Catherine Muir told me that the people were going out of it soon, leaving for Victoria ; and I said to myself that if I did get the appointment, we could give up the shop and go back to our old home, and perhaps buy it out of the Building Society ; the owners want to sell it and very likely would let it go cheaply."

"And are you to spend all your money on us ? " said Mr. Cassels unsteadily.

"My money indeed ! Our money, you mean, you silly old father. Did you talk about your money when you were working for us all. Has mother talked about her money since she had the shop ? "

"You take my breath away, child, with your plans ; and I don't think it would be right to close the shop, and so make us all dependent on you ? " ann Mrs. Cassels regarded lovingly the glowing face that was such a contrast to the wan invalid's over which it bent.

"But we would not," interrupted Jessie eagerly. "There is the garden at the white cottage, twice as big as this, quite old fruit trees and vines in it, that bear such big crops ; and there is some lucerne and we could plant more, and vegetables ; and Walter could help me as he does here with the planting and weeding and we could get Zeke sometimes, and there are the fowls and the eggs."

"Yes, and I can sell my school for something, and the stock in the shop would fetch a good bit, and there is Aunt Anne's thirty pounds ; we could keep it until I get the two hundred, then we could do without it ; and Hugh sends something sometimes. Why, we shall be quite rich. Oh ! mother, I would give anything to have you out of the old shop, where you get so tired running in and out to serve snobs of people like Mrs. Mitchell who try to patronize us and look down on us all the time."

"We need not trouble ourselves on how such people regard us, Anne."

"I know, mother, I know, but still it is galling ; though

you have always borne it like an angel," and the tears started in her eyes. "But it must have been horrid for you many and many a time; and I have been thinking ever since we first talked of this appointment how delightful it would be to go back to our dear old home, and see you and father comfortable there; and I have set my heart upon accomplishing it. Father, do help us to persuade mother."

"We must take time to consider such an important step, old girl. I agree with your mother that it would be a tremendous responsibility to place on your young shoulders," he looked half sadly, half proudly at her, thinking how differently he would have shaped her life had health and strength been granted him.

"When we get the two hundred, you and mother must concoct a nice letter to Aunt Anne, so as not to hurt her feelings, for she has been so good; but it would be so nice to be quite independent."

He smiled at her vigorous look-aheadness; but in the end she carried her point. The school buildings were not ready for quite two months after the appointment of the teaching staff, and before the opening day the Cassels had travelled back to the white cottage. The work of organizing the new school was an arduous task, the teaching, amusing and disciplining over two hundred little mites, the eldest not more than eight years of age; and the instructing and training of three raw pupil teachers was a strain on every faculty of mind and body. The constant movement and standing for long hours with scarcely a moment's rest at first tried her dreadfully; and often aching feet and overtired limbs prevented needed sleep. But she joyed in her work, in being able to provide for the dear ones at home. She had carried into practice her theory that a woman, given the same advantages, could earn a living for herself and others, equally as well as a man, and she revelled in the feeling of strength that the doing of this supplied. To be of use to others and to be conscious of it, was the very salt of life, she thought.

The change and freedom from worrying over ways and means wrought improvement in her parents' health. Jessie applied herself diligently to her gardening, for which she had of late developed a surprising aptitude ; and Walter was sent to a boy's school.

Letters came now and then from Hugh, and occasionally a cheque. He had left the sea and gone to an up country station, changed from there to some new gold diggings that had opened up, then went back to work on a farm, and was now droving. Everywhere he went he bore the same discontented spirit, blaming every one but himself for his non-success, never seeming to realize that it was his own want of steady application which was the drawback. When he heard of Anne's appointment, he said she had wonderful luck, and complained bitterly that he had been so unlucky. It was now over two years since he had last visited his home, and his mother's heart yearned for a glimpse of her boy.

CHAPTER XIX

EVENING IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

THE blazing sun seemed to have burned away the very power to imagine coolness, and the stones and sand that stretched around for hundreds of miles aggressively radiated fierce heat. The flies were in myriads, the grasshoppers rose in clouds wherever there was the slightest movement. The solitary man sitting under one of the stunted, dusty gum trees which grew in the dry bed of the creek, disputed with the flies each mouthful of johnny-cake that he introduced under the blue mosquito net veil that fell from his hat to his shoulders. Close by, near the smoke from the fire over which the billy boiled, stood two hobbled horses munching the gum branches which had been cut down for them, and violently switching their tails, and stamping their feet to keep off the pests that attacked them on every side.

The silence of the great Central Australia was only broken by the melancholy cawing of a couple of crows, the buzz and whirr of insect life, the breathing and munching and stamping and tail switching of the horses, and now and then the crackling of a stick on the fire.

But Laurie, for it was he, looked cheerfully around as he finished his meal; for six years life in the bush had accustomed him to silence and solitude; and besides he was on his way to Adelaide, able at last to put in practice his long-cherished dream of going to the old world and there taking up a medical course. He had been wonderfully successful after the first year. That first year! he looked back with pity to the lonely boy, working as a

farm hand from daylight to dark for a small wage, among rough people, who were not unkindly but who were alien from him by nature and training. Sleeping in an outhouse, eating roughly prepared food, in an untidy—almost dirty—kitchen, no books, no conversation that he cared for; how he missed his grandmother and Keziah's petting, the evenings at the Cassels, his school associations, the church services that had often seemed to him dull and wearisome. But, on the other hand, on the farm there were no drunkards reeling about, no obscene talk, no loud oaths, no fumes of intoxicating liquor, all of which inevitable accompaniments of public-house life his soul loathed; and there was besides the consciousness of earning his living honestly, keeping clean hands and an upright heart; and his resolution not to live otherwise, no, not even if he died for it, never once flagged.

The second year a station owner, bringing fat cattle from Queensland for the Adelaide market, who was passing through, and to whom Laurie had been of some service, offered to employ him on the return trip. Laurie joyfully grasped the opportunity. Working on the run and droving cattle came first. He began to save, and every shilling he could scrape together he invested in stock. His employer, a shrewd, straight Scotchman, who as time went on became greatly attached to his young assistant, put many chances in his way, and finally allowed him a share in a small run that he had bought cheaply. And now, Laurie thought he had made enough money to take him, with strictest economy, through a medical course at a Scotch University, where, he learned from Mr. McKenzie, it could be done more cheaply than in England. He had been able to still maintain a small interest in the station; for he foresaw that Australia was destined to become a great wool and meat producing country; and knew that his part-ownership in such safe hands as those of his generous-hearted employer, would provide something certain to fall back upon in case of need.

When his frugal meal was ended, and his pipe lit, he drew

from his pocket a letter written in an amazingly splotchy hand, garnished with illegible scratches and blots; and proceeded to puzzle out some parts that had hitherto eluded his efforts at translation. At the end of an hour, by the aid of putting in stops and a letter here and there, he made out the following :—

“DEER LAURIE,—

“Hever sin i got murred, as i give yo mer word, i goes to see yer granmar, wen in town, but it ant no yuse hex-peking her to hever look over wot yo dun, fer her yont, her be jist as biter as hever wer wor. that Looease Mitchel as got murred to the rish chap in Lunnon is stopin with her usban in Melbin; it be torked that looease as tuk to drink an her fokes is in a feeful stat aboot un, an that it was her mar as yusd to mak her tuk it to mak her strong, an it pears it wur to strong fer her, pore sole, an noked her down, an is now a tramplan an kickan of her. Willum is a teatoller has i telt yo, thank God, an haint so bad as men goeses. Miss Ann Castles is wonful clever, an as growd reel prety, but i think her look a bit peeky, i see her in town las weak, an her allers spaks kwite prety ter i, an doant seam nohays huplift tho the fokses maks sich a terdo hover her singin an her ave gorn hup ter the top wee her skool teechin. The wurman wot teeched the gals skool as kum from England got murred, an miss Cassels as got her plaze, we eared it wor two hunnerd an fifty pun a hannum, an ther his goan to be an high skool fer gals an Willum eared miss Cassels ull likele get un, a matter of four hunnert pun a hannum, sum ses five hunnert pun, er brother was to ome tother day an fokeses ses he hant to say lazy an he hant ter say a grafter, but he do seem ter ave a greesy drop in im sumow wot makes in slip bi things, an things slip bi im, an so him ketches olt a nuthan, an nuthan ketches a olt er he.

“The hother Cassels gal has as the gardin be a bit flurty, fokeses ses Walter Mitchell do be warken wee her, an that is mar is reel mad, cos her wants he to murree a rish gal

in Melbun, but im yont. Muster Cassels ave bin bad, an Musses Cassels his hall rite leestwase i eared her wur. i telt yo granmar you was gone to Skotchlan ter be maid a dokter this ere hear, an that you ad maid good munny wee kettles, an was a gone ter kep pardners in wee the hother man, while yo was in Skotchlan studding. so her nose hall abarn hit, but 'er sed nort wen i telt her. Musses Marshall harnt to well, but muster is. Musses Hall, as wor pla haken sarvans, as bin hout hin the kolny, an as got a lot ev wummen to jine aginst the drink, an start a hinnstertoot fer wummen workers, as ave bin torked of fer a goodish bit, an Miss Cassels is to singe hat a konser fer ter git munny fer the hinnstertoot, we eared as miss Cassels war haksed to a party hat govmun ouse an did singe ther an the guvners leddy mad a foine fuzz hover she and the guvner to, an pat er hup ski i as a singeger an sed to fokeses as her wur a reel leddy.

“Willums chilen hant to bad, an i maks um mine ther peas an koos; the babee is a reel fat loomp an reel pratty an vafors me more an Willum. the farm dun reel well this ear an we mad a putty penny on un, fer weet ar hup an wool nun to bad, an neks ear we be goon to git a site more sheep. Ya granmar as thre gals an a man an puts on reel stile, i thinks er wants ter let yo see wot yo loosed by not stiken to her, but Willum as be a reel good and hat is Bible, as shud be seen he be a lokal, sez she be a grene ba tree, an ull be widered hup in no time, i dunno as i wants that, but i ood be plazed to se her set back a bit, her be so flyjum, i mines ow yo telled me to spel it, an her as good as telt me not to kum ter se her ef i kudent ole me tung along a yo. So i spak back an teld her i sood say as i like, an if er wus hunnernatral i warnt hunnernatral, ter me hone boy as i nussed, an ad a usban as was makkin good munney, an ood ride in me kerridge as well as her afor i dun, her was mad, but ile go agen, like the profit afor the king of Hizreel as giv him is mine.

“An ef yer gits in want of munney jist hax me as as eaps an eaps, fer wen i murred Willum i sez, wots yors is agone

to be mine ef i murris yo, hant it fare an squeer, only one puss, an both our ans goes ter un, an he ses orl rite miss Keziah, fer he allers trates me reel respikful, an he ort, he dun a reel good thing fer isselven wen he murred i, fer i kep is ouse like a noo pin, an is chilen to, an ther be siven on um, so i herns me vittels an duds an more, an ther be tree farm ans, ter kook fer an the gal as elps is a lasy ussy, dratt her.

"Butter oodent melt in her mout wen her kum, but now her hant neer so umbel of spach, as her yused ter was, fer her got a yung man, an her is lookin ter be murred."

The great flaming ball of fire had sunk below the horizon as Laurie finished wading through Keziah's epistle. Looking up, he saw that some clouds hanging overhead had been turned into masses of floating crimson, gorgeous to behold. They were so low down that he began speculating whether one immediately above where he was sitting was within reach of a long stick or bamboo. Thinking of the bamboo brought to his mind a place on the Torrens where clumps of the great reeds grew. He closed his eyes, and was sitting there again, on a log side by side with Hugh and Anne, crayfishing. It was a grey day in early autumn, and misty wreaths hung over the tops of the distant hills, and a heavy rain of a few days previously had brought down the water, so that the narrow trickle that Jessie had been able to step over the day before the flood, had swollen into a stream almost deep enough to cover the stepping-stones. What fun they had balancing themselves on the little bits of stone that were still dry; and how nearly Anne had gone in while jumping an unusually wide space! Greyness and coolness, green rushes and running waters, how delicious the image of them to a sojourner in the Far North when a drought has devastated the land, only those who have lived in an arid region can imagine.

Looking up again at the crimson glory that still hung above him, he wondered whether one of the bamboos of which he had been thinking would, if pushed through the

cloud, bring down some drops of moisture. "It seems as if it cannot rain, no matter how it tries," he muttered. "Thank goodness, though, there is no dust-storm."

His eyes came again to earth, and wandering over the desolate plain where not a single green blade grew, only here and there a dried grey wisp meant a survival of salt or cotton bush, he became conscious of a moving dark spot far away, which in a few minutes resolved itself into horse-men.

He jumped to his feet, made up the fire anew, and by the time the billy boiled, two travellers rode up; one a white man in bushman's attire, but his boots and his horse's accoutrements told Laurie that he was a police trooper, the other a black tracker; each led a pack horse.

"Saw your smoke and made for it," said the trooper, nodding greeting. Question and answer showed that the new arrivals were glad of the offer of johnny-cakes and tea, as they had run completely out of provisions. After the meal was over and the three pipes puffing luxuriously, the police officer explained that he had come from a two hundred miles' ride. "A poor beggar of a station hand got on the spree at a bush pub, wandered off in the night, and could not be found. He was a valued hand, one of the best rough riders, and a splendid worker, besides being a real good fellow except for his outbursts of drinking, which took place whenever he went into the township. The manager kicked up a row when he could not be heard of, and wrote to the police, or probably nothing would have been done. As you, of course, know, men often disappear in this back block country, and nothing is ever heard of them, unless perhaps some boundary rider comes on a sun-bleached skeleton. I started with my boy, and he succeeded in picking up the tracks."

"You found him then?"

"Yes, dead, nearly naked, with an empty brandy bottle beside him. He must have died the same night he wandered away; killed by the infamous drink traffic, as thousands

and tens of thousands have been before him, and are being done to death at this minute."

"You don't approve of the trade then?"

"That I do not," he answered emphatically. "It is the chief source of crime, pauperism and social degradation. A police officer, if he tells the unbiassed truth—and he is in a better position than any other man, except a publican, to judge the question—can only call it by one name—infamous."

"I fully agree with you, Sergeant Arnold."

"You know my name!" queried the other surprisedly.

"Yes; I thought I knew your face when you rode up, and it has just flashed upon me where I saw you before. About six years ago you were called in to a murder case. One brother, under the influence of drink, murdered the other at a public-house—the *Queen's Head* in North Adelaide; my grandmother was the licensee. I heard you had been promoted."

"You don't mean it! Of course I remember. Another man who had been drinking with the brothers was found drowned, supposed to have committed suicide. The murderer is still in the stockade. I saw him there a short time ago when I took a prisoner down. He looks an old, grey-headed, broken-down man though he is not yet thirty. I doubt whether he will live to finish his sentence; you know they commuted the death penalty to twenty years' imprisonment?"

Laurie nodded.

"Strange to say, that affair and one other made me a total abstainer. The other affair was a temperance lecturer. He settled me; I signed the pledge then, and jolly glad I am I did so. A policeman's life is full of temptation to drink; and numbers of my old mates have been ruined by it."

Laurie's face had saddened at the allusion to the wretched man in the stockade. Further comparison showed the two men that the same temperance reformer had influenced them both. They spoke of the tremendous amount of

good he had accomplished, and of his recent death in England ; worn out by overwork and worry, acting on a constitution enfeebled long years before by alcohol.

“ But his work lives and is growing, though slowly. The idea that the world could do without the consumption of alcohol is taking hold of numbers of people ; among the working classes especially, for their bitterest poverty is distinctly traceable to it,” said Arnold.

There was silence for a time, the black boy's great dark eyes shining in the light of the moon, that now rose, and his white teeth ready to flash into smile, when presently Arnold spoke of his wonderful powers of tracking where no white man could possibly follow. Then Laurie turned the conversation back to the drink trade. It was so seldom that he found any one taking his own view of it that he wanted to make the most of the opportunity ; and besides, this man knew what he was talking of and had brains.

“ Last night I stopped at one of those wretched bush public-houses. As I rode up to the door, I saw no less than four men dead drunk, lying about under the verandah, In the bar there was a yelling fiend screeching out obscenities, and several others half drunk, grinning and laughing at him, while a young girl was serving them. There was a police station within sight and sound ; and when I went to make a purchase at the only store, the store-keeper informed me that the mob of drunken shearers had kept possession of the place for the past week ; that there was a trooper in the township, but that he dare not interfere, even if he wished, for he had been helplessly drunk himself the first day, and the shearers had locked him up in one of the public-house rooms for several hours. This day he was partially sober, and his wife was trying to keep him at home. If he dared to attempt the arrest, or even summon, any of the men, they and the publican could, and would, no doubt, at once report him. The store-keeper also informed me that the trooper, who had preceded the present one in charge, had tried to carry out his duty and compel the publican, who was a woman, to keep her house

according to the provisions of the Licensed Victuallers Act. She was very friendly with the Inspector of the district, himself a hard drinker though not what is called a drunkard, and wrote to him complaining of interference with her trade, with the result that the trooper was notified not to interfere again. It seemed to him, said my friend the store-keeper, that licensing benches and police very often imagined that licences were to be given for the benefit and enriching of the publican, instead of for the convenience of the public.

“I got the store-keeper to put me up; for all night long the men were fighting and yelling like fiends, and in the morning their battered heads and faces smeared with blood were awful to behold. Yet if there had been no drink those men would, most of them at any rate, have been decent fellows.”

“It is the strange force of habit,” said Arnold, “that blinds men’s eyes and prevents the people from rising up in their strength and sweeping the curse away. If it were found, for instance, that some sort of tea drove men and women mad, causing them to become unnatural monsters, ignoring the most sacred ties, committing the most debasing crimes, destroying and being destroyed by the influence of this particular tea, why such a state of things could not exist a month—a week, after it was fully realized; the violent agitation it would arouse would not only demand the destruction of the tea, but would insist on the direst pains and penalties being enforced against those who produced the article. Any government which attempted to side with the traffic would inevitably fall, and if the law officers did not carry out the duty for which they were paid, lynch law would most certainly come into existence. It is, as I said, only the extraordinary force of habit that prevents this being done with the trade in alcohol. Substitute the name tea for the name alcohol, and all the vested interests of brewers and publicans which at present constitute such a tremendous power would be as nothing in the whirlwind of the people’s wrath. Adult suffrage and

the use of the ballot, which is now so largely advocated, would let the voter say what he wanted, and give him the power to enforce his rights. The trade in alcohol is, I believe, doomed, but every inch of the way will be disputed."

"The mills of the Gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small," quoted Laurie.

"Yes," answered Arnold grimly, "and in this particular matter they are grinding out retribution even now. For instance, the mortality returns show that people engaged in the trade die much more quickly than any other class. They get what they ask for—money made easily, but death is in the pot for them, as for their victims. I don't know that it is good taste for me to talk to you like this when you still have a relation in the trade, perhaps?" he added, looking apologetically at Laurie.

"Yes, my grandmother has a large interest in it, I believe. But speak freely, please. I severed all connexion with the traffic years ago; and intend to do what little lies in my power to bring about its downfall. I am going in for medicine."

"Then you have a grand life's object before you. Medical men, by their researches into the manner in which alcohol affects the human body, might become a strong power against drink."

"I wonder you have not gone in for the platform work in the temperance cause, when you feel so deeply on the matter and can speak so well."

Arnold shook his head laughingly. "My gifts do not lie that way. I can talk quietly about what I have heard and read; but when it comes to standing on a platform and holding forth, why any ass is not in it with me. I tried it once or twice years ago, but—and he laughed again. "No, we must all work on our own lines."

"Practice was probably all you needed. You conduct your cases in court?"

"Yes, no trouble about that; and very likely you are right; but I have a wife and bairns who would need to be

kept while I was learning ; and I hope I can do good work for the community as it is. Typhoid fever knocked me over a while ago, and as my strength seemed slow in coming back, I asked to be sent a trip up this way for a change ; but I have a district near Adelaide, and my next step, an inspectorship, is not far off. Given the fostering of healthy public opinion on the drink traffic, and the promulgation of wise laws, an efficient police force is the next desideratum. There I see my vocation just as you will find yours in medicine."

"Not many of the police, I imagine, looked at things as you do."

"Well, no, not many ; and it makes matters rather unpleasant for me at times. But there are more than you would think, principally total abstainers ; the moderate drinkers are exposed to a tremendous amount of temptation through constantly having to be in and out of public-houses, for it is there their chief work lies. If public-houses, or rather the selling of alcohol in them, were abolished, there would be little for the police to do ; the force could be diminished at least fifty per cent. and the tax-payer that much relieved."

He took his pipe out of his mouth, and thoughtfully flicked away the ashes before replacing it.

"Where was I ? Oh ! yes, I was going to say that there is a great deal of drunkenness among the police, especially in the country districts. Away in the back blocks they are chiefly a law unto themselves. The inspector seldom comes round ; and when he does, the troopers let each other know ; so that by the time he arrives everything has been put ship-shape, and the man's wife or his friends manage to keep him straight for the time. The publican is also put on the *qui vive* ; and it is astonishing how long-suffering the people are in a small place, where the business interests and relationships are so intertwined ; they seldom report either trooper or publican, and as a rule a visit from the inspector does little good. The best plan would be to station only total abstainers in the back blocks, instead

of as now, sending the most worthless as a punishment."

"What other reforms would you suggest?" queried Laurie.

"Well, education of the rising generation in temperance principles should certainly come first. Of course adult suffrage cannot be withheld long."

"Do you mean suffrage for women as well as men?"

"Women?" said Arnold dubiously. "Politics is scarcely a woman's sphere, I think."

"Why not? She has to abide by the laws made. Surely it is not too much that she should ask to have a voice in choosing her law-makers. Women owning property are taxed, and they should have a say in the expenditure. A British maxim recognizes that there should be no taxation without representation."

"From that point of view there is certainly something in it; but I don't cotton to women mixing themselves up in politics, there is so much rough, dirty work in it. You go further than I do."

"Probably because you have not thought much about the matter. The use of the ballot and the holding of meetings in public halls instead of as now in public-houses would do away with the most objectionable features in elections. It is from women that the great purifying influences come. Man has the greater force in action, but it is often a blind force. Women give suggestion because they have quicker insight, and more single-mindedness. On them depends the making of homes; and vice is the foe of the home. Society will never be what it should, until men take women into partnership in the house-keeping of the nation. I have been lately reading a book called *Social Statics*; the author's name is Herbert Spencer; he deals ably with the enfranchisement of women on the ground of justice. I will send it to you if you would like to read it."

"Thanks, I should be greatly obliged."

"A question asked by a little girl first set me thinking

about the drink trade; that, and her mother's influence changed the whole current of my life; so you must excuse me if I wax rather warm on the subject of granting equal rights to the sexes. Once give adult women as well as adult men the suffrage, and the abolition of the traffic in alcohol is, I firmly believe, a foregone conclusion. Of course I am pre-supposing the education of the masses. A world-wide league of women, vowed against legalizing vice in any form, might indeed regenerate society and usher in the long-looked-for golden age."

They puffed away in silence for a time; then Laurie added. "But your experience, sergeant, must have shown you where minor reforms could come in. It will be long ere communities are ripe for total abolition; meanwhile there should certainly be a striving to minimize the evil, and save some of the millions who are now drifting towards the pit of ruin that swallows up the drunkard."

"You are right, and no doubt much could be done in that direction. Why, for instance, should the selling of drink not be placed on the same footing as to hours of selling as any other commodity? The one should have no advantage over the other. The bars should be exposed to view, night and day, by means of plate-glass windows. The abolition of barmaids would remove enormous temptations from young men, and old ones too for that matter," and he smiled sardonically, "who go into the bar to lounge and talk to pretty girls. The selling of drink to children and young persons should be strictly forbidden. Better regulation of clubs is imperative, and a sound system of local option would be a grand thing."

"What do you say to local control of the trade?"

"I believe it would do great good, if efficiently carried out and safe-guarded. Prohibition would be far better, but meanwhile local control might become a sort of half-way house. Of course the danger of the Government becoming interested in the traffic as a source of income needs to be considered, although now the taxation returns work in that way. But the temperance party could mar-

shal their forces to meet that difficulty. It should be arranged that the Government officer in charge of the selling of alcohol could make a profit on all temperance drinks, and the boarding-house would of course be in his own hands. As he would only receive a fixed salary for selling alcohol, his interest would not lead him to try and increase the output. The general travelling public would benefit enormously, for at present half the public-houses, both in town and country, are mere drink shops."

"That is true; I have found it continually so when travelling.

"Eliminate private profit in the drink trade, and some of the most glaring evils associated with it would be eliminated also. The farce of the permit system, where publicans obtain permission to keep open house all night, generally on the most flimsy pretexts, would be abolished. No man would ache to work after hours, if he got nothing for it. The enticement of barmaids, the supplying of drink to people under age, and those already intoxicated, the Sunday trading, the long hours, would all be swept away at once. Hotels would become houses to accommodate the travelling public in fact, instead of, as now, merely in name."

So they talked far into the night, and at last lay down on their sand pillows to rest. The procession of the worlds had become visible, and, wide awake, Laurie gazed at the indescribable splendour of tens of thousands of suns flashing in the clear arc of heaven, with a radiance and effulgence unknown to cooler latitudes. Crowds upon crowds of constellations beheld the atom of humanity beneath, whose proud spirit enclosed in clay looked up undauntedly at the majesty of the universes, knowing itself greater than them all. For though glorious beyond imagination, the worlds are yet but matter and devoid of divinity's essence—spirit; a spark from which our mortality enshrines.

"The starry heavens above, and the moral law within," he mused on the wonder of them both. How glorious in the future it would be for the soul, by means of some of

the invisible powers that encompass it, to be able to wing its flight through the starry fields of heaven ; and meanwhile, by force of the moral law within, to help on the regeneration of the planet to which that soul had first been sent.

CHAPTER XX

TWO PROPOSALS

THE heath bells hung over the sides of the roads that wound among the hills. Pink and white and crimson ; the bees found the tiny bells and hummed their approval, while they rifled the honey stores. Upward the peak of Mount Lofty cut the deep blue of the Australian sky ; downward the road gleamed between a bordering of bronze and dark green bracken, twisting steeply into the gullies, where little creeks and waterfalls kept up melodious tinkle, and the maiden-hair fern grew wherever it could find room to spread itself.

A robin balanced on the top-most twig of a wild cherry tree showed his scarlet breast, then flashed away from two young people who came walking slowly round the elbow of the hill. The man's fine athletic figure was not so very much taller than that of the slender girl beside him, and her vivid colouring contrasted with his pure Saxon type. Tears were not far from the girl's eyes as she faltered—

“ Oh ! Laurie, I wish you had not spoken so ; but you must forget all about it, and be as you have always been—one of my dearest friends.”

“ Very easy to say, ‘ Forget.’ As to being as I have always been, that is the trouble, Anne. I have always loved you from the day I walked across the road with you, past the drunken man ; and always shall love you, if I live to be a hundred. But never mind, don't worry ; if you cannot, you cannot, and there is an end of it. Mind, though, I shall never quite give up hope until you marry some one else.”

"For goodness sake don't do that. I shall never marry anybody, I am certain; so you would only be wasting your time, and all to end in nothing."

"Tell me one thing. Is there anybody else?"

"Of course not," and the dark eyes looked steadfastly into the blue ones, though her colour rose. "Work is my love, as I thought it was yours."

"Work is the salt of life, but it could never alone satisfy my heart; nor yours either, I think. Sooner or later you will know what love is, and there are plenty ready to teach you. It was seeing that to-day which hurried me into speaking before I intended; I felt it was impossible to go away for years without letting you know that for me you would ever be the one woman in the world."

A long-drawn cooe came from below, and smiting the hill-sides echoed and re-echoed. They hastened their steps in silence to where a drag, several buggies, and riding horses were drawn up at the side of the road.

"We were beginning to think you were lost," said Jessie, who, a petite figure, dressed fashionably and attended by a young man on either side, advanced towards them. "It will be dark long before we get into town."

"Yes," added Will Mitchell, the taller of her cavaliers; "these two were organizing a relief expedition. Norton had stuck the teapot in his pocket, and Jessie a cold fowl in hers, when the tops of your hats crowning the Mount appeared, whereupon the others insisted on the provisions being handed back, and devoured them in toto, bones, teapot and all. I tried to keep a morsel for you, Miss Cassels; but it was of no use, they would not listen, and your descent occupied such a long time that the board was clean swept."

Laurie and Anne protested that they wanted nothing; it was such a short time since luncheon.

"Lucky you do not," said Jessie, "for everything is packed up, and some of the traps have already started."

"Something tells me that our old German woman will

have tea ready for us," said Will, as he turned to where the horses were tied up.

"That means that you ordered it," called Jessie.

He laughed lightly for answer, and the three young men soon had the horses harnessed in the drag, and those of the party who were to occupy it handed in, among them the chaperon, a little old-maid aunt of one of the girls. Will drove, and though they were the last to take the road, his four fine bays quickly outdistanced the rest of the picnickers. As they overhauled each trap there was a running fire of pleasantries between the several occupants and Will; but as he drew away from the rest he devoted himself in silence to steering the steep downward grade.

Anne, who was also very quiet, sat where she could see the driver's side face; and admired the finely cut features that now showed the lines of resolve that were so often lacking in them. He loved his horses, and took delight in showing his control over them. If he could only hold himself as well in hand! she thought; but there was a rumour that he had lately failed more than once to do so. The pity of it! The pity of it!

She glanced at Laurie opposite, talking to Jessie; no weakness in that face; its original strength had been deepened by the daily use of a firm will. A woman's life would be absolutely safe in his hands; for the purity, truth and fealty he would demand from his wife, he would render to her in full measure. What happiness to love a man like that, so unselfish and just, and full of thought for others. If she had cared for him, he told her, he would joyfully have taken upon himself her responsibilities towards her father and mother. But what nonsense to let her thoughts run riot; love would be Jessie's lot—work, hard work must suffice as her portion.

Fun and banter had been going on between the rest of the party, and the talk had fallen on the gossiping propensities of men and women; one side asserting that women outdistanced men, the other, among whom Jessie and a girl named Dolly Green were the leaders, accusing men of being

by far the worst offenders. One young man, a great admirer of Dolly, to tease her, vituperated loudly against women's sins in the way of gossip, winding up by asserting that when met in offices and markets and streets, they only talked on business matters, the state of the crops, the price of wool and wheat, the mining output, etc.

There was a lull for a moment ; and then above the rattle of wheels and the ring of horses' hoofs arose a small, quiet voice from the corner where the old maid sat.

"Yes, and you will often hear the word '*she*' mentioned."

A chorus of laughter followed. Then Dolly leaned across to Anne. "A penny for your thoughts ; you are very quiet." She attempted to answer gaily, and to join in the light talk of the others ; but was glad when the long "Devil's elbow" had been safely negotiated, and at the foot of the hills they drew up at the picturesque German refreshment house, with its funny little balcony, the outside flight of steps leading to the upper rooms, its doors and windows gaily painted in pink and blue stripes, and the marigolds and roses clinging about its feet. There were tables set in the balcony ; the hausfrau and her two rosy-cheeked daughters brought trays of tea and hot scones, fruit and cream and honey, as Will had previously ordered.

There was much merry talk and laughter, while the good things were being discussed, for it takes little to make youth bubble over with joy ; and the old maid too enjoyed herself immensely, cracking her dry little jokes and beaming on the boys and girls, as she called them. There were snatches of song and chorus, and Dolly's admirer brought out a concertina from the sitting-room and favoured his audience with a succession of nigger melodies.

Before they had finished, Will went inside, and paid right royally, not only for his own party, but also for supplies to those coming up behind, the first detachment of whom were in sight. Then the impatient horses were allowed to proceed, and soon were clattering through the

streets of Adelaide, and shying at the dark shadows between the lights.

The drag and horses were left in the city, and the party, ten of whom lived in North Adelaide, walked home. At first they kept together; then Robert Norton and the Aunt, Dolly Green and her admirer, drew in front, and Laurie and Jessie followed. The other four walked abreast for a time; but when they paused to listen to a night-bird's song, that sounded sweetly from a willow overhanging the Torrens, Will contrived to keep Anne behind, and to widen the distance between the couple in front and themselves; lingering under pretence of watching a flock of wild duck that were winging their flight through the evening sky.

Anne was too preoccupied by her own thoughts to notice anything unusual in Will. Some months ago it seemed to her that his old fondness for the child Jessie was ripening into a deeper feeling; but there came a check and matters had gone no further, though he was frequently at the white cottage, and was constantly meeting Jessie both at home and abroad. Mr. and Mrs. Cassels were quite oblivious of what was going on; to them Jessie was still in her childhood. The sisters had never exchanged a word on the subject, for Anne with her pride and reticence had a horror of lightly talking of love and marriage, and Jessie's training had implanted in her mind some of the same feeling.

But there was another reason, known only to Anne herself, that had kept her lips closed. As far back as she could remember, Will had always stood on a pedestal in her imagination. His handsome face and figure held her artist eye; his good-humour, his frankness and geniality had captivated her; and when she was little more than a child, she awoke to the fact that her admiration and idealization had become love.

The knowledge of this was a positive torture, for she was conscious of symptoms of almost dislike shown by him to her ever since the time when Jessie stole the peach, and gave him a garbled account of her part in that incident;

also she associated unsought love in a woman as shame, and resolved never to let the slightest hint of it escape her. So well had she acted her part all these years that no living being, unless it were her mother, had the slightest suspicion of the truth, though once for a moment a flash of it came to Mrs. Hall.

As she grew older her keen insight descried the weak will which was the chief defect in his pleasure-loving nature. Often her scorn lashed the inability to throw off a sentiment for one who, with all his lovable qualities, fell far below her conception of what a man should be. Was it possible, she often said to herself, that all her life was to be maimed by this weakness? To-night the question repeated itself with ever-deepening regret; for had it been otherwise she might not have been compelled to inflict such suffering on Laurie. Laurie, strong, self-reliant, firm-willed, who fulfilled her ideal.

But what availed? She did not love him in the way he wished, and less he would not take; while it would be for ever impossible for her to marry, unless her whole heart's passion went with her marriage vows. Again she repeated to herself that work was enough for happiness, and the dear ones at home needed her.

As they crossed the bridge, she roused herself to answer Will's question, as to whether she would walk round the plantation and down the Terrace, instead of going the direct path. "It is such a lovely night, and the moon is just rising; I know how fond you are of watching that."

"Very well," she answered, rather wondering that he wished to prolong his walk with her, but thinking that perhaps he wanted to speak to her of Jessie: they had seemed very cool to each other all day; perhaps they had quarrelled. She would be glad, too, to keep a little longer out of Laurie's sight.

So they sauntered along, almost in silence, Anne's eyes dreamily seeking the path at her feet; Will's turned on her with an intensity that must have given enlightenment had she looked at him.

“ Miss Cassels.”

For years he had never addressed her by her Christian name; the proud coldness and formality which had often puzzled him seemed to demand equal ceremony.

“ What did you say ? ” asked she, raising her eyes to the great silver disc which had soared above the hill-tops; and then, as he did not answer, turning them on him. The moonlight showed her something in his face that made her heart leap.

“ Anne, I shall call you ‘ Anne,’ though very likely you will resent my taking the liberty.”

“ It is an ugly name,” she said with an embarrassed laugh. “ How I used to hate it when I was a child.”

“ To me it is simply the most beautiful name in the world, because it is yours, for I love you, Anne.”

“ What ? ”

“ It is true. I have wanted to tell you for months, but you always held me at such a distance that I could not. But I made up my mind that I would speak to-day.”

“ You cannot mean it,” she exclaimed vehemently, a throng of emotions struggling for mastery. “ I thought——” She stopped, overwhelmed.

“ Thought what? That it was Jessie ? ” he asked quietly.

She looked her assent.

“ Well, it was Jessie, I acknowledge, at first; but that night at Government house when you sang showed me I had made a mistake. If I have seemed to pay Jessie attention since, it was because I could see you only in that way; you always held yourself so aloof from me.”

Her face sharpened austere. “ Do you think that honourable ? ”

“ Perhaps not, strictly so; but ‘ All is fair in love and war,’ and surely you will forgive me, seeing it was done for your sake,” and he attempted to take her hand.

“ I will never forgive you,” she answered slowly, drawing back. “ To gain your object you were willing to risk wreck-

ing Jessie's happiness, and then expected to build your own upon the ruin of hers. Shame on you to call yourself a man, and serve a weak girl so. It was dastardly."

"You talk of what you know nothing," he said, wincing at her scorn. "You are too cold to know what love means, or you would understand and not judge me so harshly."

"Listen!" she turned to him with sudden impulse. "Let me tell you what has been buried in my own heart. From the time I was a tiny child, you were my hero; your kindness to us children made me imagine you a veritable Bayard. Then when I was with your mother, you were always courteous as well as kind to me—the little drudge—and the impression deepened; and I, child though I was, loved you. Yes, loved you," she repeated deliberately, "and knew it too."

"And you will; you do now; tell me that it is so?" he exclaimed joyfully, trying again to catch her hand.

"To what purpose should I?" demanded she, moving a step backward and evading his grasp.

"To what purpose? Why, that we may be betrothed; that you may be my wife, I your husband, of course. You can do anything you like with me, Anne. I will not only be your husband, but your devoted lover as well, and——"

He stopped, offended, for she had broken into a peal of laughter. Her nerves had been tried dreadfully by Laurie's declaration, and now this was too much, and she laughed and laughed hysterically, feeling herself meanwhile perilously on the verge of tears.

Will stood sulkily beside her, puzzled, impatient, wretched; for his passion for her was sincere—as sincere, that is, as his nature was capable of; and merriment could only augur one thing.

"When you have finished," he began.

"Excuse me," and she struggled with the lump in her throat, "but it struck me as so comical, 'my most devoted lover!' First Jessie, then the widow at the last

picnic, and Miss Green this afternoon ; my eyes are sharp, and I think I saw your arm going round her waist under pretence of assisting her when she was reaching up the cliff for wild flowers. There is a lady in England, too, I believe, to whom you were a devoted lover little more than a year ago. There are others also on whom you have bestowed your kindly attentions, and you are now good enough to wish that I should not feel slighted, and so of your royal clemency bestow some favours upon me. Evidently for you and me devotion has very different meanings. Thank you, oh so very much," and she made him a deep curtsy.

Will's face had turned crimson. "By Heaven, you are wrong, Anne. I never loved any one as I love you. You make much out of nothing ; a little fun is no harm, every one flirts."

"Do they ? Perhaps so. Your experience is greater than mine, I acknowledge, so you may be right. But I should scarcely have thought it was considered good form by most men to carry on flirtations with other women while professing to be devoted to one. You would probably carry on the same fun if you were married ; and then if you found it amusing, your wife might not. Your talk of love is a desecration of the word."

"Anne, give me a plain answer. Yes or No ?"

"No, then, thank you, Mr. Mitchell. If ever I do think of marrying, I must have all the heart of the man I marry, or none at all."

"And you shall have, if you take me ; and you shall make of me anything you like. I have never cared for any one as I care for you : the rest, as I tell you, was only fun," and for the third time he put out his hand to touch hers, but for the third time she drew back.

"No, say no more ; it is useless. The man I marry, if, as I say, I ever do, must act rightly because it is right, not merely to please another. To his own self he must be true, or changing his circumstances will never make him so. You cannot turn a thief into an honest man merely by shutting

him up ; the change must come from within ; he must be a law unto himself."

"Thank you for the complimentary comparison."

"Perhaps it is rude ; but what I meant to say was, I don't believe in marrying a man to reform him. I am too full of faults myself for that, and want some one to help me upwards. Were I to accede to your request, you would probably, before long, see some one you liked better, and think you had made a dear bargain. Come, we had better go on, they will wonder where we are."

"Stay a moment. Have you anything else against me?"

She looked at him steadily, but did not answer.

"Tell me if you have, Anne. Is it that you would have me become a teetotaller ? I know you are rabid on that point."

"I should be very, very glad as a friend to hear you were resolved to give up intoxicants. And," she added significantly, after a pause, "I am certain that your future would be benefited by such a course."

"I suppose people have been gossiping to you ?"

"Gossip would matter little, if there were no cause for it," and she moved on resolutely.

Will walked beside her, angry and baffled. His light, careless nature had been powerfully attracted towards her when he saw the admiration her unusual gifts excited. There are some people who always need the hall mark of the approval of the majority before they are convinced of the worth of that which attracts them. Such men and women never seek the flower that blooms unseen ; they must have the one whose value has already been examined and appraised by the multitude, or their own sentiments lack fervency.

Such was Will's disposition, and the spoiling and flattery that had fallen to his lot gave him a very exalted opinion of his own merits. He was sure he was a very fine fellow ; and hitherto had never doubted his powers of winning any woman to whom he decided to throw the handkerchief. Anne's coldness had been the element which crystallized

his volatile affection, and gave it the needed impetus to resolve. Her rejection, besides hurting his vanity and wounding what he called his love, completely confounded him. He could not believe the reasons she gave were the true ones.

"Is there any one else in the way, or has the business anything to do with your refusal? Because I could go into something else; the governor could well afford to give me a start."

"There is no one else. Certainly I would never marry a brewer any more than I would marry a publican; but if you were in the most honourable of trades, I could not marry you for the reason, as I have told you, that you are not the type of man who would suit me for a husband, any more than I am the type of woman who would suit you. From your point of view, I should require too much from you; and you would then feel you were under a yoke which galled. We should get pulling different ways, and perhaps come to dislike each other. Don't say anything more about it please; it is useless."

When they came to the gate she said, "I suppose you will not come in? The others don't seem to have arrived."

"No thank you." He hesitated a moment, then, "There is no need to tell Jessie. You will not mention to her what has occurred?"

"Why? Would you prefer telling her yourself?" and she looked full at him.

"I don't see that she need know it at all."

"So that you may have a little more fun; commence a fresh flirtation? Certainly I shall not promise. I shall be guided by circumstances."

Then Will's disappointment and anger bubbled over. "Very well, tell her. No doubt it will give you pleasure; you are fond of that sort of thing. I remember how you told of the poor little thing taking the peach long ago. God save me from your conscientious women who don't care whom they hurt, as long as they satisfy their own scrupulosity," and he turned abruptly from her.

She stood and watched him up the lane and listened to his vicious bang of the gate, a storm of feeling tearing at her heart. So the chance that at one time would have seemed to open heaven had come, and because she willed it so, gone. Her happiness should never be built on another's misery ; his conduct to Jessie had been atrocious ; and who was to know but that his selfish flirting had brought unhappiness to others. Then his handsome face rose up before her imagination, and pleaded for him ; and she remembered his many kind words and deeds.

Her brain seemed whirling, and she held on to the little gate. What a day it had been. First Laurie, now Will. She had received proposals of marriage before ; but they had scarcely disturbed her thoughts at all ; the hidden sentiment that had held her so firmly all these years prevented her even considering them, and she had felt it a sort of desecration that any man should look on her as a possible wife.

What a nuisance all this falling in love and wanting to marry was, and how disturbing. Much better to think of nothing but one's work, and be satisfied with that. Laurie and Will—two such different men—and how differently they had taken her refusal ; Laurie endeavouring to soothe her pain ; Will trying how much he could hurt her. In general society Will's genial manner showed to advantage beside Laurie's quieter one ; but the man for a woman to live with and if needs be, die for, would be Laurie, with his high ideals, his unselfishness and gentleness to whatever was weak ; a selfless knight and a stainless gentleman.

She went inside the gate, and sat down on the old stump under the date tree ; for she was unwilling to meet her mother's eye until she had gained more composure. Half an hour went by before she rose and entered the house.

Father and mother were there, the former reading aloud, the latter sewing ; but to her intense surprise Jessie also was sitting at the table, work in hand. She looked up gaily.

"So you have come at last. Why you seem to have the

faculty to-day of losing yourself, first with Laurie, now with Will. Wouldn't he come in ? ”

“ No,” answered Anne, sitting down and taking off her hat and striving to answer composedly, but feeling dreadfully confused as her mother's quiet eyes searched her burning face. “ Didn't we have a delightful day ? The rest went home, I suppose ? ”

“ Yes, Robert Norton has gone to the place where Laurie is boarding ; they wanted a business talk, I fancy. Robert wants to help Laurie all he can by giving him letters to the professors and people he knew at home. Tell mother about the fun we had at luncheon.”

Jessie rattled on and Anne tried to second her ; then Jessie gave a prodigious yawn that showed all her pearly teeth, declared she could scarcely keep her eyes open, and bidding them good-night retired.

It was an hour later when Anne opened the door of her apartment. It was in darkness and she shielded with her hand the light she carried, from the draught that set towards her. Glancing that way, she saw Jessie, still dressed, sitting by the window.

“ Why I thought you were in bed long ago, why are you staying up here in the dark ? ” She tried to speak lightly, though her heart sank, for her sister was looking at her with her fair brows frowning, and lips set close.

“ Shut the door, Anne. I have something to ask you.” Then, as she was obeyed, “ What was Will wanting you not to tell me ? I was sitting on the date tree seat waiting for you to come home, and heard your conversation. Directly after he left I slid round by the back door. Now then, what did you mean by talking of the possibility of commencing a fresh flirtation with me ? ”

Anne saw it would be impossible to keep what had happened from her, even were it desirable, and she was by no means sure that such a course would be wise, so recounted in as few words as possible Will's proposal and her rejection of it.”

Jessie listened quietly, unplaiting her long silken tresses

the while, and keeping her face turned away. When the story was finished she was silent a minute, then said slowly—

“It is hard that you should have everything, brains and a fine voice—even in looks you beat me now, though when we were children I was always considered the pretty one. Don’t speak, I am not a fool, and know, though I am not so clever as you. Offers of marriage and the ability to make a large income either by teaching or as the professor, who wanted you to go home and have your voice trained said you could, by singing. All this, and now you must even take Will, who has always belonged to me.”

“Surely you don’t blame me?” asked Anne, almost choking with distress.

“No, I suppose it was not your fault. Though sometimes I wonder whether you are cold to men on purpose to attract them; it seems to answer.”

Anne’s cheeks burned hotly, “What nonsense, Jessie!”

“I’m not so sure that it is nonsense. Why did you not take him? Because he is a brewer?”

“If he left off brewing to-morrow, it would make no difference,” and she slipped to the ground, and put her arms round Jessie’s knees. “Dear, you are not vexed with me in any way?”

“No, not exactly, only it seems unfair that you should have so much. Of course I know I am giving myself away; but you know very well I was always fond of Will, ever since I was a baby and he a big boy carrying me about in his arms, and he has always made such a fuss over me until lately,” and tears fell from the blue eyes.

Anne mutely caressed her, feeling terribly guilty the while, and presently said, “But you don’t care so very much about him, dear?”

“Oh, yes I do. Not in the wild passionate manner you would fall in love, if ever you do. We can’t all be volcanoes, and it wouldn’t be comfortable if we were. I am more practical, not always dreaming like you. A dreaming volcano, that is what you are, never know when you may

burst up. 'A regular vixen' Hugh used to call you when the two of you had a fight."

Anne meekly rubbed her head on Jessie's knees.

"Besides, it's galling to be cast off like an old glove. To-day he scarcely took any notice of me at all; that was why I got away as soon as I could and did not press any one to come in. I wanted to think. He is rich too, and I always said I would marry a rich man."

"I wonder you would care for riches made as he and his father make them."

"Oh, of course, you are always so unpractical. You ought to marry Laurie; he has just the same wild notions. Couldn't I have got him to leave the brewery and start something else? Money is a good thing used for good purposes, I suppose you will admit that. However, it is no use talking, though I shouldn't wonder if he wants to come back to me after he has cooled down. But I don't want to play second fiddle; though I might pay him out by getting him to propose to me, and then refuse him."

"You would not be so unladylike as to lower yourself to such meanness," exclaimed Anne, raising her head indignantly.

"Oh dear! always in the clouds—a volcano in the clouds ready to burst out. What is the use of always wanting people to come up to your impossible standard?" she answered peevishly. "He has treated me badly, for he was always dancing after me at one time, and people saw it, and now they see how he has cooled off. There have been dozens of others, too, that he has flirted with, so it would only be paying him out in his own coin, and I will, too, if I can."

Poor little Jessie! Her self love and pride had received a severe blow, but Anne saw wonderingly and thankfully, too, that her love for Will was not deep enough to cause her any lasting pain. For herself she scarcely knew where she stood, her standpoint seemed to have shifted. Only that very morning when she was dressing for the picnic she had said to herself, knowing that she would meet Will,

that she would never be able to get over her infatuation for him ; it would spoil all her life.

And lo ! here in a few hours, the passionate love of years had sunk to a low ebb ; she was not even sure that it had not wholly vanished. As the thought flitted through her mind, she drew a deep breath of relief, albeit half scorning herself for her changeableness. His familiarity with Dolly Green, his perfidy towards Jessie, and his taunts had helped to set her free, and throw out in strong relief Laurie's steadfast, faithful love, and noble characteristics.

CHAPTER XXI

A DECLARATION OF FAITH

THERE was the chink, chink of the stone workers on Church Acre. Presently it stopped, and the voices of the workmen melted in the distance, as they gathered up their tools and left for the day. One of Anne's dreams was coming true ; for a stately cathedral was gradually rising on the spot where the goats had once been tethered and the boys used to play cricket.

Mr. Cassels' cane lounge, with its covering of warm kangaroo rugs, had been placed by the old stump, beside which a bed of pansies were lifting their little faces to look full eyed at the evening sky. The human eyes were lifted skywards too. A sea of molten gold, with dark slate coloured shadows between its billows, dashed and stippled as by a giant's brush, covered the western heavens while in the zenith, the blue shone like dark sapphire, between clouds of rose and crimson.

Lying there, naught visible to his upturned eyes but the gorgeous glow above, the invalid felt almost like a disembodied spirit that has crossed the boundary of the earth, and poised itself awe-entranced, floating in a sea of colour, before winging its flight onward.

Oh ! the joy of being finished with pain and weakness and weariness, earth behind, the new life fronting one ; the wrinkled wrappings of mortality dropped, the clothing of immortal youth assumed ; the loved ones lost awhile, hastening to clasp one's hands ; the knowledge that soon we shall return to welcome those we have just left. What

earthly eecstasy, be it ever so great, can possibly compare with rapture of the purified and released soul ?

Such were his thoughts when Mr. Marshall tapped him on the shoulder.

"Dreaming, old man, dreaming ?" he said as he sat down on the stump.

"Yes, Marshall." He smiled happily. "And blessed be° dreams for those who are forbidden active life. Constantly, during those long drawn out years of compulsory inactivity, the dreams of night have helped me to bear the burden of day. Fancy ! the pleasure of remembering the precipices scaled, the mountain heights trodden, the swimming through great billows, whose salt spray washed one's lips, the wandering among indescribably exquisite scenery, the listening to wondrous music, the——" He broke off abruptly, with a laugh. "I suppose this all seems great nonsense to you ?"

"Well, yes it does. I could never dream such dreams, nor would do if I could ; the awakening would be too unpleasant. Let me tread the firm earth, lay hold of truth's hand, be it ever so hard and cold, see things as they are, without illusive prettiness."

"But it does not necessarily follow that to see things as they are, without illusion, must needs show them to us as ugly and repulsive."

"No, only as we naturally wish the truth to be beautiful. I should be suspicious of one's desires over-riding one's judgment and distorting it."

"Strange the difference in natures," said Mr. Cassels, musingly. "You, inclined to think that truth must probably be ugly, and opposed to desire ; while I as naturally believe her beautiful and that desire is the reflection of truth, often distorted and darkened, but still catching some of the gleams that radiate from her."

Mr. Marshall brought out a small volume from his coat pocket. "Here is a first instalment of that book I was telling you of. The writer indulges in no visions, will only believe as far as he can see."

“Which is not far ; for the simplest processes of nature are enigmas to us, when we try to explore their very beginnings. Science is based on the facts known ; but what of the facts unknown ? Thank you very much, I shall be glad to read it ; though do you know I have lately largely lost my interest in philosophy, and devote myself more and more to the greatest Book of all. The philosophers are good fellows and excellent company up to a certain point of the road, then they say, ‘ See we have brought you so far, but all is darkness beyond, and further we cannot help you. Farewell.’ For me, Marshall,” and Mr. Cassels put out his thin hand and touched his friend’s knee, “ I am content to bow before the Crucified One and say, ‘ My Lord and My God.’ ”

There was silence for a little time, then Mr. Marshall said slowly, “ It is a splendid thing to have faith like yours, but in spite of the theologians, faith is not an effort of will, it is a gift of nature, aided no doubt by training. I was born sceptical and being asked to believe too much ended in making me believe nothing, at least nothing of what is called revealed religion. My father, a Calvinist of the strictest type, and a good man, mind you—as far as his life went, could reconcile with the justice and mercy of God, the dooming of tiny babes to suffer eternal torment in hell fire, and expected me to do the same. That was the first thing that revolted me, and it ended by finally driving me out of the fold ; for it was ever one of my peculiarities that I could never pretend to believe what I did not, a freak of nature, no doubt,” and his lips relaxed into a smile, more sad than mirthful.

“ You are one of the Chief Shepherd’s flock all the same, my friend—of that I am sure. Your revolt possessed more of the spirit of Christ’s teaching, than your father’s adhesion to such hideous doctrine.”

The gate swung open and Anne came through.

“ Old girl, you are late,” said her father as she greeted him and Mr. Marshall.

“ Yes, I had an extra German class, coaching teachers

for exam." Her voice was weary and her father noted with pain the dark circles under her eyes. "But you are late too, father. Jessie ought to have hunted you in before now."

"She has been busy, budding and grafting her fruit trees, and only went indoors a few minutes before Mr. Marshall came."

"Well, you had better come in now." But Mr. Marshall told her to allow him to attend to her father, and bade her take herself off from where she was not wanted, and go and rest before tea.

She smiled in listless fashion as she turned away, and Mr. Marshall brought the wheeled chair that was standing close by and helped Mr. Cassels into it.

"You find it a great assistance, do you not?" he asked.

"Yes, splendid! See, by turning the wheels with my hands, I can send it along the paths, and go all about the house. I had forgotten you had not seen it before. It was Anne's idea; she gave it to me; Jessie gave me the cane lounge, and Laurie sent me the rugs—wrote to his station friend to get them. The children are all so good."

"Laurie has passed his second year, has he not?"

"Yes, and in the first class. He will make his mark wherever he is he."

"Anne is not looking too well."

"No," Mr. Cassels sighed. "For years she has been working at high pressure, burning the candle at both ends, I tell her. Her mother and I have been trying to get her to ask for three months' leave and go away for a thorough change, but she ridicules the very idea. She earns a large salary, but sometimes I fear it is too dearly bought."

"No use asking you to stay to tea, I suppose?" said Mrs. Cassels when Mr. Marshall had conveyed her husband safely indoors; "you could never sit down without your beloved by your side."

He answered in the same light vein that she possessed the gift of divination.

Walter, very muddy and dishevelled, came rushing in from football.

"Ready in a minute," he bawled, as he hurried off for a cold bath.

The maid, a new institution, in whom Jessie greatly delighted and who came in the day and went home at night, brought in the tea. Jessie and Walter had robust, healthy appetites and kept up a constant stream of chatter and raillery, but Anne hardly touched the food on her plate and scarcely spoke at all, merely answering in monosyllables when questioned about her day's work.

Towards the end of the meal, Mrs. Cassels placed a plate before her, "It is the best pear left, and your father has been keeping guard over it for you so that no one else should have it."

Anne knew that it was also his hand that had arranged the green leaves and chosen the painted china plate which she specially liked; but she only said, "Thank you," in an indifferent tone and with a smileless face, then tried to eat a piece of the luscious, scented fruit.

She felt she was ungracious and knew how her thoughts would scourge her afterwards, but seemed as if she had no power to help it, she was so tired and unstrung. During the past few weeks many such episodes had occurred. Only the day before her father had asked her to fasten his necktie, and she had jerked the bow and broken it, looking impatient the while. The gentle glance resting on her made tears rush to her eyes as she turned away, and every time during the day that she remembered the occurrence, it gave her a wretched, miserable feeling; and yet, here she was doing the same sort of thing again. In a way she knew she was not well, but determinedly resisted admitting the fact, for to obtain leave would mean things getting out of gear at school. Poor Anne had not yet learned the truth that no one is indispensable in the social machinery. There may be a momentary stoppage, a little confusion when an especially capable man or woman falls out of the ranks; then the procession goes on, an-

other has taken the lead, the Master Hand directing, and so we learn something of our own littleness and of the relative importance of things.

The strain of past effort had begun to tell upon her before she was appointed to the High School. To fit herself for the position she had studied early and late, depriving herself of sleep and recreation and exercise. Adelaide now boasted a tram service, and it was much easier to step into a car and sit down, than to drag weary feet in walking.

The High School had been started in the teeth of strong opposition from those interested in private establishments ; and the head mistress felt that she was not only called upon to justify her own appointment, but the policy of the Education Department also. The school seemed, as she sometimes despondently said, to absorb her body and soul. Music, painting, general reading, had to be entirely given up, and her solitary rambles and communings with nature, that had hitherto formed such a large factor in her life, became a thing of the past. Her sleep was broken and filled with painful dreams ; and often when teaching her exhaustion was so great, she felt it would be a relief to throw herself down on the floor and lie there. Jessie's coldness after the Mount Lofty picnic, and Will's final fall from his pedestal had been contributory causes to shake her nervous system, and make her unlike the energetic, cheery girl of yore.

While wretchedly conscious of the difference, she had largely lost the power of self control, and her fits of impatience and irritability both at school and at home wrung bitter tears from her in secret, many a time and oft.

Her parents comprehended and excused, but Jessie and Walter with the inexperience and intolerance of youth, were more inclined to resent what they called her wet blanket moods. Jessie had forgiven Anne and quite recovered from her disappointment, when Will according to her prevision, tried to go back to his old footing. He had, he said to himself, been a great fool, dazzled by the attainment and social success of a girl who would never have been

to him such a loving wife as his little playmate. He did not care for your "Women's Rights" women, who wanted to bend men to their own lines and rule them. Give him the simple little womanly woman who would be satisfied with her home and social circle, and not want to undertake the impossible task of reforming the world.

All this he contrived to either say or insinuate to Jessie, when after a trip to one of the neighbouring Colonies he came back quite cured of his love for her sister. She innocently listened, agreed with, and flattered him, taking care meanwhile to induce him to make his attentions as public as possible, so that all their friends and acquaintances should mark them. At last, persuaded of her appreciation and gratitude, he proposed, and to his amazement was again rejected.

Up to the last Jessie had not been quite sure as to what answer she would give; but when it came to the point of decision there was no hesitation left. She bade him keep on trying his prentice hand, and no doubt in time he would become a past master in the art of proposing. She had enjoyed their little play, it had been very amusing; but now serious work demanded her attention such as planting out onions and hoeing potatoes. He, of course, had no need for such common drudgery; beer paid much better than growing fruit and vegetables, and gave plenty of leisure for such high-class recreations as flirting and proposing; but life with her was more strenuous.

It was a terrible take-down for Will. A disagreeable glimmering of doubt as to whether his high estimate of himself could possibly be a little bit out of focus, intruded itself. He forgot the charming manners for which he was generally noted, and used swear words, as Jessie delightedly told Anne. For a few weeks he was almost a misanthrope, and made his mother imagine he must be ill. Then a pretty little girl who served in a cigar shop he patronized, came in to fill the vacancy in his fancy, and contrived to draw him into a flirtation that helped wonderfully to heal his wounded heart and vanity.

Mr. Cassels retired to his room directly after tea. Anne was occupied in writing, and Walter with his school-books, Jessie had returned from seeing that the maid had finished her work, and left everything ready for the morning. She loved ordering and arranging, and revelled in having Zeke to work for her in the garden and a girl in the house. Her garden was now paying remarkably well, for she was developing it on quite scientific lines.

"You might get up early Walter, and help me to cut the vegetables ; the cart is coming early for them, and that old Zeke is so slow. Fancy ! I shall have a fine lot of mushrooms."

"Very well, if I am not knocked out after doing this exercise. It was pretty smart of you to make a mushroom bed."

"Wasn't it ? ' And it is so easy. There will be some asparagus too. A new hat will grow out of it at the end of the month. At the dance last week, I had on an apple frock, strawberry gloves, cauliflower shoes ; and a tomato comb was stuck in my hair."

"You can turn the mushrooms into pants for me, if you like," said Walter grinning. "I tore mine playing football at school, and had to change them before tea for my best ones."

"Perhaps I will if you are good, and help me in the morning. But mind if you lie snoring in bed, and leave me to get my nose and fingers frozen alone, you will have to go to school with bare legs, for mother won't let you wear the others. Of course you could pull up your socks as far as they would come, and put on your longest coat."

They both giggled at the image called up.

Anne moved impatiently. "Do be quiet. I cannot think what I am about when you make such a noise."

Jessie and Walter looked grimacingly at each other. Jessie went and got the torn garments and devoted herself to darning them, while Walter went on with his home work. Presently he whispered, "I saw Will Mitchell driving out a girl, with a high stepping pair to-day. See what you

have missed ; instead of tramping about in thick boots, shovelling dirt, you might have been sitting up aloft, turning up your nose at the poor critters who couldn't do better than walk."

Jessie tweaked his nose for him, and then there was a scuffle, terminating in knocking some books to the ground. Anne got up with a frown and taking her writing materials, swept from the room.

"Bully for you, old crabsticks, good riddance," called Walter.

"Hush," said Jessie. "Poor old Anne is not well. It was too bad of us to make such a noise," she nodded remorsefully.

"I don't see what good it does her to be so crabby, even if she is not well. Why, if a door bangs, she almost jumps out of her skin. I believe she does it on purpose," grumbled Walter, with the contempt of healthy boyhood for nerves. "She isn't half the fun she used to be."

"Where is Anne?" asked Mrs. Cassels, entering and looking round.

Jessie explained, while Walter affected to be wholly devoted to his lessons.

"You should be more considerate ; the poor child is working for us, far more than for herself. I do wish she had a little sitting-room where she could work alone."

"In another year, when the house is our own, we shall be able to build some more rooms."

"Another year, but so many things happen in a year," Mrs. Cassels sighed as she sat down by the fire.

"How is father now?"

"He is asleep ; but I doubt whether he will be able to go for his drive to-morrow, he seems so weak to-night."

"I hope he will, those drives always do him so much good. It has been a grand thing for him, Anne's hiring the pony phaeton, and for you too, poor old dear."

"Yes, your father and I have had better times of late than we have had for many long years, but it is only laying the burden on Anne instead."

"She loves doing it."

"True, but the thing is whether it is not too much for her. Her outbursts of almost feverish energy contrasting with her lassitude at other times, show there is something decidedly wrong. If she had to stop where should we all be?"

"Oh! mother, don't be looking at the dark side. See how well the garden pays. If I took up a little more land and had Zeke regularly I could keep things going myself, now there is no rent. But Anne will be all right, I am sure, and no need to worry. We must insist on her taking a holiday. We could get Hugh to send something more, and Walter is old enough to leave school at any time and get a situation, though Anne has set her heart on his working for a profession.

"I'd be jolly glad to go to work now," interpolated Walter, lifting his head. "I could get a situation that one of our fellows took but is giving up; he gets seven-and-six a week."

The light was burning in her father's room when Anne had finished writing; and going to the door softly, she saw he was awake.

"Come in," he said. "Your mother will be back directly."

She sat down on the chair beside the bed. "I went to the carriage builder to-day, father, and ordered a new light bath chair for you, that old one is too heavy and clumsy. They will make this so light that it will move along with the slightest push."

"But you will never have a penny for yourself. You spend all your money on us."

"I have quite as much as I want; and besides, you know very well, or you ought to know, that what I spend on you gives me the greatest pleasure of my life."

How thankful she was in after days to remember the latter part of her speech.

"We shall soon be able to buy a little pony trap for ourselves, and then you can get out every day, instead of only twice a week."

She kissed him and went away when her mother returned. His eyes were dewy as he talked of the chair and the trap.

"We have much for which to thank God, Emily, but especially for giving us Anne; she is so unselfish."

"So she is, but I wish she were less moody than she has been of late."

Her husband looked distressed. "That is so, but it is undoubtedly caused by overwork, and not feeling well. It is not herself really; she cannot help it."

"Of course, I know that," and Mrs. Cassels wished she had not given vent to her impulse to speak; but she had been vexed with Anne for showing such indifference about the pear. She had seen the keen pleasure with which her husband had set the fruit apart, and knew how proportionate was his disappointment that it had not been appreciated. In an invalid's life small things loom large, and often give either exquisite pleasure or pain.

He was aware what had prompted his wife's remark.

"She has been the joy and pride of my life," he said emphatically, "and if need arises, tell her so. We must insist on her getting away on a good long holiday; nothing but that will set her up, and make her her own bright self again. Do not take notice of any little irritability, dear; she cannot help it. We have good children every one of them."

She placed things ready for the night and shook up and turned his pillow. As she put it back, he caught her hand.

"Dear, do you know, I think your work for me is nearly over."

"Don't, Andrew," and she drew a quick, sobbing breath. "I cannot bear to hear you talk so."

"Why not, dearest? The happiest life must end. Sooner or later the two who love each other must part; and it will only be a little time of parting for us, of that I am certain; then there will be the joy of beginning a fresh life together again—a life free from all the drawbacks of this one. And for how long have I been a burden to you? Yes, I know all that you would answer, that you have never

felt it so and I know that is true. Well, well, I will not say anything more," and he stroked the head, now more grey than brown, that lay upon his breast. "But my mind is at rest about you. God has helped us wonderfully and the children will repay you in the future, for the way you have worked for them; they are doing it now. Even poor old Hugh, though he may never cut much of a figure in the world, will never disgrace you. He is growing towards the light. 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' When he is old, you see, wife. He has been a great anxiety to us, but all that sort of thing seems to have left me. I feel sure that he will come safely into harbour at last. Kiss me, darling wife, and do not fret."

His voice was so cheery and he looked so bright that her heart revived. When, before she slept, she heard his calm breathing, she comforted herself with the thought that probably they might still have many more years to spend together.

Anne just paused a moment at the door of her father's room next morning as she was leaving for school, to ask hurriedly how he was, and say good-bye. He looked even paler than usual, but said cheerfully he was very well; and in the rush of work she partially forgot a sort of foreboding that had fallen upon her as she left the house. But when the bell rang for dismissal, and the girls marched out in double file to the strains of a lively march played by one of their number on the piano, she determined to go to a fish shop, before taking her tram, and get some oysters, of which her father was very fond.

This made her a little later than she had intended, for she had told her mother that she would go home to dinner, and she expected to find them waiting for her. But no one was sitting at the table, and as she laid her parcel down, Mrs. Cassels came in, her face looking white and drawn.

"Thank God, you have come. Your father seems very ill, and we have sent for the doctor."

As they reached the bedside, he looked up.

"The end has nearly come, old girl," he said faintly.

"Nonsense, father, nonsense; the doctor will be here in a minute; take some of your cordial."

She scarcely knew what she was saying; her voice sounded in her ears as a long way off. He nodded slightly to express assent, and she poured out part of the mixture from a bottle standing on the dressing-table, and put her arm round his neck to raise him up, but his head rolled helplessly. She beckoned Jessie to come to the other side, and together they held him, while Anne put the glass to his lips. But he could not drink and signed to them to lay him down.

For a moment he closed his eyes, then opened them, and looked at the agonized faces bending above. One long, last gaze at his wife, a smile, and then—stillness.

CHAPTER XXII

A GLIMPSE INTO THE UNSEEN

“BUT, doctor, you do not say that there is absolutely no hope?”

“There is a possibility, but not a probability, of recovery. It is now two weeks since she was taken ill, and her life has been hanging in the balance for days. Still, she has youth, and an originally fine constitution, though it has been greatly weakened by what is getting to be the curse of the age—worry and overwork; and women can’t stand it like men, whatever they may say. Had she been pursuing an occupation as healthful as yours, Miss Jessie, she would not have been lying where she is now. You must keep up heart though, and hope for the best. If you could only manage to rouse her, it would be a good thing; but even when she is fully conscious she seems incapable of taking an interest in anything.”

Anne never retained more than a shadowy remembrance of the three days which elapsed between her father’s death, and before she herself was stricken down. She remembered walking to and fro continually in her own room; and backwards and forwards to where all that was left of the father she so passionately loved, lay.

There was the going into the garden and gathering white blossoms of almond and stock and hyacinth; and the coming back to sit beside the still form, while she wove wreath and cross. There were the grief-stricken faces around her, and the presence of friends. There was the arrival of Hugh an hour before the funeral. There was the standing before the open grave in the beautiful North

Road cemetery, and listening to the words of hope and consolation, but that were words only to her. There was the returning to the mother who put her own grief on one side so that she might take her child into her arms, and try to break down her stony despair.

But from mother and sister and brother alike she turned, and looked so ill that they persuaded her to go to bed, where she lay when left alone, as she begged to be, utterly broken down.

Her dominant impression was that nothing mattered now. Her chief aim for years had been to make her father's life comfortable and happy, and she had failed, or only succeeded to a very limited extent; and now everything she had striven for seemed at an end. The others could provide for her mother, and there was nothing for which she was wanted particularly in this world of disappointment and sorrow. Oh! that she could go and join her father.

But would that mean meeting him again? Now that he had passed away from sight did he still live and retain his individuality? Otherwise of what use would be a further existence? To meet and not know each other would be for either of them the very irony of cruelty. God creating a love too strong for death to quench and then coldly crushing out the life's blood of it. Of course the New Testament was full, not only of the hope of immortality, but also of the certainty that those sundered here would meet in full fruition of joy in the hereafter; but was it a certainty? That was the question of questions. Whence come we? What are we? Whither do we go? Kant's cry a hundred years ago was still unanswered, and ever must be, apart from direct revelation from the Creator. Was such a revelation possible now? Without such a one, she did not believe that faith in a life that should be a further development of this, could ever be hers.

Since she was a tiny child, the same longing for certainty had echoed and re-echoed in her brain, dormant during long spaces in her busy life, but always ready to start up

afresh and cry aloud. Now it imperiously demanded reply, urging what was the use of further striving in a land of shadows; shadows that constantly slipped by and melted away, leaving the eager hands empty.

Science told that we could not truly see the substance of the objects that surrounded us; could that be a symbol of higher things? Philosophers were convinced that underlying matter there is a real substance that corresponds to sensation, though they find that it is impossible to prove that such conviction is true. Might it not be just as likely that there is a reality to correspond with our idea of love and justice and mercy; and that our longings and aspirations are but a reflection from the grand reality which the Universe holds for its weak, fainting children.

Weak, ah! how weak we all are, ever intending to do right, and ever falling below our ideals. How she had loved her father only God knew; and yet how often, especially of late, had she pained him. That last night, why had she not let him see how truly she appreciated his thoughtfulness in taking such trouble about the pear. A tiny action, but only one of a thousand which all her life he had been doing for her; and she coldly taking them as a matter of course. Oh! if she could only put her arms around his neck and lay her head on his breast, and sob out all her grief and remorse. Then at last tears came; tears and choking sobs and cries that brought her mother and sister to her. Presently she lay, spent and shattered, and after a time slept; at first in snatches, then deeply and heavily.

In the early morning Jessie, who was sleeping with her mother, was awakened by hearing groans. The door between their rooms was open and she spoke, but receiving no reply, struck a light and, going to her sister, asked what was the matter. Anne's eyes were open, but Jessie was frightened to see that her look was an unseeing one. "Pain," she muttered, "pain all the time."

It was a bad attack of pneumonia and pleurisy, and other serious complications followed. Day after day went by and the high temperature showed no sign of abatement. She

got weaker and weaker and was in a semi-conscious condition most of the time, nearly always able to hear and understand when spoken to, but utterly without power to stop the constant babble of words that fell from her lips. She knew she was talking nonsense, and often made an effort to check herself, but only to start afresh in a few minutes.

More than once they thought her dying; and she, somehow knowing what was in their thoughts, felt a strange thrill and exultation. Soon she would penetrate the mystery, if it were given to one earth-born to do it; if not, she would never wake to know the disappointment.

But at the end of a fortnight the feeble life still lingered. This morning there had been a consultation of doctors, and Jessie heard the verdict with sinking heart. Hitherto she had been strong in hope but now both doctors acknowledged that the chance of recovery was very small, and she knew they would not have done that unless they believed that death was drawing nigh.

These weeks of trial had developed Jessie wonderfully. Hitherto Anne had been the one on whom the rest leaned when there was anything calling for special strain. Now Jessie had risen to the occasion, and besides sharing in the nursing, had taken the whole of the housekeeping, thus leaving her mother free.

Hugh helped her in the garden, but all the necessary forethought and arranging for the market-cart was carried out by herself. Responsibility strengthened, and brought with it the power to answer to what was demanded.

Through that day Anne lay in a sort of comatose state, only feebly stirring when medicine or nourishment was brought to her. She was perfectly sensible and knew what was going on around. When, after the first week, it became apparent that Mrs. Cassels and Jessie could not do the nursing alone and there had been a difficulty in obtaining some one suitable, Catherine Muir had come forward and offered her services, which were gratefully accepted, she

arranging with her assistants for the carrying on of her business.

At the doctor's night visit, Catherine was on duty while Mrs. Cassels and Jessie tried to obtain a few hours' sleep; and Hugh and Walter waited up in case of being needed.

After examining the patient and changing the medicine, the doctor beckoned Catherine into the next room, and said in a low voice that he found the patient decidedly weaker, that she must watch her closely and at the least change for the worse send for him.

Catherine went back, noiselessly arranging whatever was likely to be wanted during the period of watching; and after standing looking at Anne a moment, sat down behind the screen which was interposed between the dim night lamp and the sick girl's face.

Anne had overheard the doctor's whispered opinion, but it aroused no particular emotion in her. After a period of mental torpidity her mind had again suddenly awakened and been seized upon by her grief. Her father had gone from her, perhaps for ever, and she had never expressed to him a tithe of her love. Did he know now, or would he ever know that her often seeming carelessness and indifference did not reflect her real feelings? It was something outside herself, her unstrung nerves and tired body which refused to obey her will, that had made her fail so often in a daughter's duty. Over her soul surged the tide of a despairing remorse, until desperately she felt as if her brain must give way. "Father," she cried, "come to me if only for a moment and tell me you forgive."

She never knew whether in an instant sleep fell upon her, or whether it was a waking vision. Her father stood before her. She rose—fell into his outstretched arms. "Dear old girl, always the dearest of old girls," said his voice in strong, happy tones as he clasped her close, close to him, and then—in another moment he was gone.

She opened her eyes. Catherine, startled but only catching a word or two of that agonized cry, was standing beside the bed.

"Do you want anything, dear?" she asked, bending down.

Anne shook her head and closed her eyes, and Catherine, after a minute's waiting, went back to her seat.

But in those few moments, what a flood of immense and utterly unexpected rapture had caught up Anne. From that time forth, nothing could ever shake her firm conviction that her father, in response to her bitter need and cry, had been permitted to hasten to her help.

Still feeling the strong pressure of his arms, she lay without moving, recalling the enormous revulsion of feeling that had taken place in that tiny space of time. Still seeing the face, that last looked upon, had been thin and worn with the pain and sorrow of many years, now transfigured and glorified.

She was conscious of a sense of whiteness and of light streaming from his face and figure. She knew somehow that he had come from experiences which had aroused wonder, awe, rapture, indescribable joy; for it was all shown in his expression, though how she could never explain. He was certainly her father, but not as she had known him, for weakness and patient suffering had given place to immortal youth and vigour.

But, above all, the fact most borne in upon her was that he lived; and living loved her as of yore, and therefore she also should live to meet him. She knew now that there was no death in the sense in which mortals use the word; only change, and change from lower to higher. Such change did not obliterate the love born on earth, but on the contrary strengthened and ennobled it.

Immortal life! Immortal love! the glory, the bliss of the knowledge that it awaited her. Yes, knowledge; for her to henceforth there would be the knowledge, based on personal experience, not capable of proof to another; but henceforth for evermore a part of her very self.

Five minutes passed. Then Catherine, feeling an undefined uneasiness at the strange cry and the look of exaltation on Anne's face, went and stood beside the bed.

For a moment her heart almost stood still, there seemed such a silence. She bent lower and listened long ; then arose with a satisfied smile, for Anne was sleeping gently and peacefully like a little child.

CHAPTER XXIII

VISIT TO THE SUMMIT

ANNE used to smile to herself when the doctor said that the long sleep saved her life. That madness or death would have seized upon her if her father had not come to the rescue, was her immovable conviction. But to none did she tell her secret ; it seemed utterly impossible to let it pass her lips. Hereafter she always understood how the vision of a few moments had changed the whole tenor of St. Paul's life ; and she also comprehended his allusion on a subsequent occasion, to the impossibility of putting into words what he believed he had seen in another communication from the spirit world.

Her family were astonished at the change in her. Her gentleness and cheerfulness seemed almost unnatural, and Jessie found herself wishing for some of the old manifestations of impatience and petulance. It was not natural, she said, for dear old Anne not to get into a passion and fly off at a tangent when anything went wrong ; this quiet patience and ever ready smile made her feel inclined to cry ; could it be that her sister's brain was weakened ?

But happily such was not the case. Anne would in time go back to her temptestuous tendencies ; for the original disposition with which one starts out in life is no more to be entirely eradicated than one's physical peculiarities ; though both may be modified by education and environment.

But just now her state of mind was lifted above the normal plane, and never again could her outlook on life be the same as it was before the convulsion that had shaken the very centre of her being. That glimpse into the un-

seen had changed her standpoint and altered her ideals in many ways. What did the small drawbacks and irritations of this mortal life matter? The ends for which men strove? When in a few brief years at most, they must all pass by, clean swept away, not by the chilling waters of Lethe, but by a flood of unspeakable bliss, the immortal life that would give full development to the dwarfed aspirations and longings that are of necessity part of this imperfect existence.

Hitherto her family had leaned on her, now in her new meekness it was delightful to cling to them for support. Even Hugh was different from the old teasing, quarrelsome brother. The loss of his father had been an awful shock that shook him out of the self absorption that was his worst fault.

During the long lonely night ride to catch the coasting steamer that followed the receipt of the telegram Jessie had sent, conscience had spoken with no uncertain voice. Ah! that first death in a family. How awful the riving of a thousand tendrils of association! The sense of desolation, of irreparable loss, of opportunities of showing kindness gone for ever! The heart-breaking longing for the sound of a voice stilled, of a touch and smile vanished. Hugh had much cause to reproach himself, for he had, in the pursuit of his own selfish aims, frequently forgotten that no man liveth to himself; and that it is but a poor sort of existence—not true living—that issues from selfish gratification.

To the short-sighted onlooker Mr. Cassels' life might seem to have been a failure, but his children knew and realized more and more, as time went on, what a grand heritage he had left them. His example of patient suffering was an inspiration; and whatever blows and shocks of fortune awaited, they would be ever strengthened by the memory of how he had borne himself in far worse circumstances.

Hugh's wanderings had exposed him to many of the grosser temptations, some of which would probably have

overcome him, had it not been for that early home training in temperance and strict probity.

He always remembered going with his father to buy some stationery for their store in the early days of Mr. Cassels' illness, when he was still able to get about occasionally by the help of his stick on one side, and some one's arm on the other. The principal of the shop was writing down the order while a middle-aged, wooden-legged man assistant counted out the articles. Hugh watched with a boy's interest, and was surprised to see the assistant wink significantly at Mr. Cassels while putting down a heap of penholders.

With attention wide awake, Hugh beheld his father, who was sitting close beside the counter, take the penholders in his hand, and after counting them, deliberately push back, when the owner's face was turned, six ; at the same time directing to the wooden-legged man a stern look that rendered him crestfallen. That lesson sank deep into the boy's mind and made him scorn the slightest dishonesty.

To his mother Hugh's new tenderness was shown most, and it was exquisite balm to her sore wounded heart. Mother-like she had always made excuses, and clung to the one who was least satisfactory of her children.

One day, Anne sobbed out her grief that she had not been a better daughter to her father.

"Why, child," interrupted her mother, in surprised tones, "you need never trouble about that. Your dear father thought there was not, and never had been before, such a daughter as you. He was always talking of the way you worked and slaved to find the money that made his life so much more comfortable of late years."

"But a great deal of it was ambition. I wanted to show that I could do things—make my way as well as men do—and the work engrossed me so, that I neglected every day the little things I might have done for him. There was always something in the future that I was reaching out for ; I did not see present opportunities slipping, and now they have gone for ever."

She spoke brokenly and with labouring breath.

"Maybe, child," answered her mother soothingly. "None are perfect; but it is not well to be too introspective. Be satisfied that we all think you have done splendidly; and we all recognize our debt to you." Then she repeated Mr. Cassels' words on this very subject the night before he died.

Anne listened greedily, for though the vision had given her a certainty of meeting him again, yet there would always be the bitter regret over lost opportunities. She must, she felt, seize hold of everything that palliated her falling short of duty, and hold it to her aching heart; for she recognized the futility of remorse, the certainty that no depths of repentance can ever recall the past or obliterate an action done. The stone is thrown into the waters, and to all eternity the ripples of movement from it go on.

But she also realized what her mother pointed out: that to dwell on such reflections unfits for present duty; and present duty is the only one possible to grasp. It is best to set up one's failures as beacons of warning, and having failed in our responsibility to those gone, make up in some degree at least by extra solicitude for others that remain.

Her recovery was slow, and the doctors said that six months' change was imperative, if she were ever to thoroughly regain her normal health. Mrs. Norton, who had driven from the hills about this time to inquire after the patient, insisted that the pure air of the Summit was just the thing to set her up, and that she must come to them at once and spend the summer, for she would be only too glad of her company.

The Nortons were becoming wealthy people; had built a new house and furnished it in quite modern style. But Mrs. Norton told Anne that she still hankered after the old home and the old times, when with only the occasional help of her boys, she managed the whole of the household work herself instead of having, as now, to give over much of it to a maid.

“The boys would have me have one; and a nice time I had breaking her in. She smashed two of my best china cups, tore the muslin curtains to rags in the wash, cleaned the silver-plated cruet with brick dust, and of course took the silver all off; threw out knives and spoons in the wash water so that they were lost in the rubbish heap, burnt the bottom of the milk saucepan, and goodness knows what else, before I came to understand that I must not trust her to do a single thing without having taught her all about it first. It seems hard to pay a girl high wages to do what she knows nothing about. Father says he might just as well hire a man to break in colts, who has never had more to do with horses than drive an old broken-down, half-starved donkey in a milk-cart; or get in a carpenter to put up shelves, and then have to teach him first how to plane wood and drive nails. He says we women have got something to learn from men yet. And now that she is getting to be a real help, she is going to be married, and I shall have to begin all over again.”

“The thing is on a wrong basis. Girls should be trained to housework first before undertaking it; just as men have to learn a trade or profession before practising it. It is as Mr. Norton says. No mercantile house would pay a raw lad the same wages as a trained clerk; but in domestic employ good and bad helps are all jumbled together, and paid pretty much alike.”

“Yes, it’s like paying a shilling to put your hand in a lucky bag; you may draw one of the very few prizes, but most likely you’ll get a thing worth about a penny. I wish you’d start one of those schools for helps Mrs. Hall used to talk about.”

“Perhaps I may yet,” said Anne, smiling thoughtfully. “A private one, under competent management, might be made to pay I am sure, or the Government might be induced to start one in connexion with the city schools.”

“As I was saying, my dear, the old times were the ones. I was never so happy as I was when all the children were young, pulling at my skirts and looking to me for every-

thing ; that is the happiest part of a woman's life. Now Robert is nearly always away in Melbourne, and Jim in the Adelaide Bank, and Earnest an auctioneer, and Fred in a shipping firm, and the three only home for Sundays—they are away all the week. I have Alf still for the college holidays, but he is leaving school at the end of the year, and I don't know whether he will stay on the farm ; all the boys seem to take to town life."

They were standing in the broad verandah whose pillars were draped in honeysuckle and scarlet passion-flower. From where they stood there was a magnificent view of the ranges, and Anne sniffed delightedly the delicious scent of the wattle, whose golden banner was flung wide over hill and dale.

"How can they prefer to be shut up in offices when they might be here, working under the blue sky!" and she looked up at the glorious arch above. "If ever I have money enough, I shall buy a little cottage in the hills and come up in the summer."

"There you show your sense, my dear ; there is nothing like the country for pure wholesome living. But it is funny ; somehow children nearly always want to be something different from their parents, I've noticed it many a time. Town boys want to go into the country ; country boys into the town. Mayhap we've given our boys too much schooling. Doing Latin roots they call it, and making those things like spider webs and rings—sort of maps—you know what I mean."

"Euclid ?"

"Yes, Euclid. I always forget the name. Those things don't seem to strengthen their feeling for grubbing up roots of trees, and ploughing straight lines for the crops. They want to do something that won't dirty their hands, and so that they can wear smart coats and ties. But I misdoubt whether it's as healthy a life as a farmer's. City smells are different from the smell of the brown earth when it is turned over, and the sweet hay when it is cut, and not so wholesome. God set Adam to grow things when He wanted

him to be happy ; not to be gluing his eyes and hands down to paper and ink."

"Yes," said Anne, sinking into the canvas chair Mrs. Norton placed for her. "Country life and country work seems to me the most desirable of all. But men and women are needed in cities too."

"Mayhap they are ; but I pity the poor things. And now I've got to get Maria to wear a cap when she waits at table ; the boys say all their friends have girls in white caps, and they don't like not to have one when they bring their friends up here. It's only lately that any but Government House people made their girls wear caps ; and it seems like putting on airs for plain people like us. Father says he would let the boys go to Hongkong first, but I like them to be pleased with their home, and not have excuses to stay away. Not that I think they would ; but so many young fellows do, and it is often the parents' fault. So I suppose I shall have to face Maria about the cap, though I know she will play up. She wanted to wear long-tailed gowns sweeping all the dirt into the house, and aprons as big as pocket-handkerchiefs when she came first, but I made her alter that. I know you won't mind her not wearing a cap when you are here, though you have been to Government House ; only when the boys come up. How do you think I ought to put it to her ? Perhaps you would do it for me ; do try, my dear, she can't give you notice."

Anne promised to do her best, and was so successful that when the three brothers came on Saturday night, Maria, to their eminent satisfaction, wore when waiting at table a little affair of muslin and lace. They did not know that Anne had made it herself and worn it two or three days before, and that Maria, seeing how becoming it was to the wearer, had not been difficult to persuade, especially as her mistress had promised to add an extra shilling a week to her wages on account of the concession.

The country life was exquisite to Anne. After the years spent in close schoolrooms, idleness was sweet ; for brain and body had been alike tired out. All day long she spent

in the open air, renewing acquaintance with bud and blossom and green leaf, and listening to the voices of the wild things that haunt the hills. She had time to use her eyes in nature's garden; time to think; time to read poetry and fiction. An absolutely reposeful, resting season, for Mrs. Norton left her free to do as she wished.

There were few visitors; sometimes a farmer's wife or daughter drove over for an afternoon, or the boys brought a friend to stay from Saturday night until Monday morning. Once a month Mrs. Norton drove her to Adelaide to see those at home and report progress to the doctor.

She was finding out where her real self stood. Never again would she rest satisfied, unless she were able to join in more definite work for humanity than Government school teaching gave her. There she found too much red tape, too much thought for preparing and passing examinations which were no true tests of real progress, too little care for the true interests of the bodies and souls of teachers and taught. For some wider issues she must strive, must take her place definitely among those who unselfishly fought for the uplifting of the masses; must contribute her mite towards the solution of some of the great social problems of the day; and brooding over these things she again began to try and express her thoughts in writing.

So the long beautiful summer passed, and very gradually she grew strong; but a delicacy of the throat and chest remained; and when towards the end of her leave she began to talk of making arrangements for resuming her school work, the doctor absolutely forbade it. Another three, or perhaps six months' rest she must have.

After leaving him she walked towards home as in a dream. She could not expect that her position on the education staff would be kept open indefinitely; and yet how hard it would be to let go all she had struggled so strenuously for years to gain.

Jessie was busy that same afternoon in her garden superintending Zeke's weeding. She was Zeke's uplifted goddess, and she plumed herself on ruling him with a rod of

iron. His slow bovine intelligence bowed to her quick smartness, and deferred to her authority ; but like some other idolaters, he liked to give his idol a knock now and then.

" Yes, Miss Jessie, I 'ad me 'ead redd ; 'e says I was a good pootry reader, ony I couldn't read the big words."

" Dear me, are you ? "

" Yes ; I'm ter git some papers in a few days ; you know you allers gits papers wen you 'ave yer 'ead read. 'E says I'm ter come into some money soon."

" If you keep leaving off your work every time you talk, you won't come into much money for helping me. If you have finished that bed, go and nail up the piece of trellis that is loose."

" 'Ave yer got the rammer randy, Miss Jessie ? "

" The hammer is right in front of you. Use your eyes and you will see it."

The trellis was not finished when Jessie called out indignantly—

" Ezekiel, you have been missing this piece ; there is a big thistle, and there on the other side is a lot of wire-weed. You ought to be more careful. Come and pull them up at once. I'm continually telling you not to scamp your work. You finish that part properly, while I see to this little bed."

Zeke clumped back to where his misdeeds stared him in the face, and both worked awhile in silence. Then Jessie came over to see how he was carrying out her orders, and sent him to the tool-house for a rake. As he returned he glanced at her work.

" Please, Miss Jessie, 'ave yer done yer bed ? "

" Yes ; why ? " she answered shortly, looking up from replacing a plant that had been dug out, and whose root she was vexed to see was broken.

" Please, miss, there is some weeds there you missed."

" Eh, what ? "

" Yer left some weeds in yer bed ; there is two thistles and a dangaline."

“ Well, pick them up and don’t talk.”

Anne who had been directed by her mother as to where to find Jessie and bring her in for afternoon tea, broke on this embarrassing episode ; and Jessie, more emphatic even than usual in her orders so that discipline might suffer no abatement from the unfortunate occurrence, pulled off her gardening gloves.

“ I have such work to keep my hands tolerably nice,” she said, passing her arm affectionately through Anne’s, “ but lemon juice answers better than anything else, and now the lemon trees are bearing so splendidly, it does not matter if I do use a few. See, my paws don’t look so bad, do they ? ” and she held them out for inspection.

“ But talking of looks, let me tell you what happened yesterday afternoon. I was walking down Rundle Street when all the people were coming from their offices. With one hand I held up my train, with the other my parasol. My shoulders were well back and my chin pretty high, as you know you do when you think you look about as well as you can. I noticed with the tail of my eye that a good many people gazed hard as they passed, but of course put it down to their evident admiration of my fine appearance, and held my head all the higher. But as I was going into a shop, a woman touched me on the elbow and said, “ I don’t know whether you are aware, miss, that you are holding up your petticoat with your dress and showing your legs ; and there is a big hole in your stocking.”

Her laugh was echoed by Anne’s. “ Whatever did you do ? ”

“ I dropped my dress and my head as well. When I got home I found there was a big hole in my stocking, just above the heel of my shoe. But tell me about yourself ; you are almost well, are you not ? ”

Anne sighed. “ Let us sit down on the old stump a minute. Mother is not quite ready, and Mrs. Norton will not be here just yet. Yes, I am quite strong again ; but I get husky with talking, and singing is still tabooed. The doctor says I must not go back to teaching for another three

—perhaps six months. Do you think you can manage for that time ? ”

“ Of course we can,” she answered briskly. “ Hugh is sending us a cheque regularly, and it does him good to be made to feel he is responsible for something ; he has been too long accustomed to think you can supply everything. If necessary we might do without a maid, now mother is beginning to bustle about and take an interest in things ; and you know house-work is my forte. If the garden were not doing so well I should feel inclined to start a rival school to yours ; only mine would be after Mrs. Hall’s idea of a training school for servants, or any other name you like to call them.”

“ The thought of whether you and I could manage such an institution has been running in my mind the past month. It could be worked and made to succeed under capable management, of that I am sure. Just see how the nursing homes Florence Nightingale has established have taken root. The work is harder, and much of it far more disagreeable than domestic service ; and yet she has induced numbers of refined educated ladies to become nurses, and from them the idea will filter downwards. Mrs. Hall’s training school is slowly succeeding ; but she has even more deeply rooted prejudices to conquer than Miss Nightingale had : and she is only one of a committee. I have an idea that if a woman—a lady fitted for the work—could induce a number of girls interested in philanthropic matters to give two or three years of their lives to this part of it, they might do more for their poor sisters than has ever been accomplished before.”

“ How do you mean ? ”

“ Say such an institution is decided on. A dozen girls of good position join as students of domestic employment, with a view when trained to take domestic service for a couple of years, and so set the thing going, and induce poor girls of the same social standing who are compelled to earn their living also to join. From them the idea would grow, and society of all grades become permeated with the truth

that the constructing of homes is one of the most honourable of all employments. In time it would cause a complete revolution in the ideals of working women."

"It's a high falutin' plan; how many girls would give up even one year to drudgery if they were not compelled?"

"There is a drudgery that is blessed. Mrs. Hall did this very same thing; the slum workers choose even a harder lot; women have to sacrifice themselves, at least the best women."

But Jessie still shook her head.

"It could be done, I am certain, if the right woman could be found to take it in hand. A beginning might be made with a day brigade, as Mrs. Hall called it: cooks and housemaids going out so many hours a day. The name servant should be abolished, as also the use of the Christian name. There is much in a name in spite of Shakespeare; there is association pleasant or unpleasant; and this dislike to the name servant is but one manifestation of the desire to rise implanted in us all. I know by my own experience, for I should never have gone as nursemaid to Mrs. Mitchell, yet I did precisely the same work, only under another designation; and the being called a servant does weigh a girl down—it is a fact not to be disputed."

"Altering the name would be a good move, I believe."

"Just as there is Nurse de Courcy and Nurse Smith, there might be Maid de Courcy and Maid Smith."

"The idea seems funny, but one would soon get used to it, no doubt."

"If home helping caught fire like sick nursing, it would soon spread to all classes, cause keen competition for passes, and be, I believe, a solution of the work question for women. The poorest girl may now have a fair education given free, so the material to be drawn upon would be practically unlimited. Both for the women who need to earn their living, and for the wives and mothers who want trained assistance in their home-work, it would prove a boon indescribable."

She put her hand to her throat and her brow contracted.

"Stop talking at once," said Jessie authoritatively, "and come in and have some tea. I am afraid, my dear, some one else will have to start the training school; there would be too much strain on the voice for you, and the risk of giving up my garden would be too great. Come along, I must get a big mug of tea and some scones for Zeke."

As they went in, arm in arm, Anne asked, "What is this I hear about your flirtation with young Green?"

Jessie wrinkled her face wickedly. "Pooh! I am only having a bit of fun."

"I do wish you would choose different fun; it often means cruelty."

"Nonsense! Men are always ready to amuse themselves with us; and it is only fair to pay them back in their own coin when one has a chance."

"Two wrongs do not make a right; and besides, all men are not cast in that mould."

"All I have ever met. Just mention one who is not."

"Robert Norton and"—she half hesitated—"Laurie."

"Bob has no eyes for any one but you, and Laurie—um, how do we know? We have seen very little of him since he was a boy, and most likely he has at home a fresh girl for every week of the year."

"He is not that sort of fellow," began Anne warmly, but she stopped, feeling her cheeks grow hot under her sister's quizzical glance and uplifted eyebrows.

"Take care, or I shall think you are falling in love with him yourself. Those long letters you write each other look suspicious. It is all very fine to talk of old friends," and Jessie laughed maliciously, congratulating herself on having stopped the threatened lecture.

During the drive home Anne's thoughts were engrossed with the question of future employment. She believed Jessie was right as to her unfitness for undertaking such work as founding a new institution would involve.

She had been assured again and again that her voice was of exceptional quality and compass, and if she had not

been so successful with her teaching she would have been tempted long ago to make singing a profession. For the present at least, however, that avenue as well as teaching was closed. Sewing and fancy work she had no liking for, and besides was not particularly good at either. A clerkship or law copying might be obtained perhaps. Then she thought of her attempts to express herself in writing ; had she really any special faculty in that direction ? Or was it like her painting, merely a talent, nothing at which she could do first-class work ? Anything short of that would not satisfy her. Perhaps the Hand that shapes all life was closing the other opportunities and pointing to this as the field in which her future labours were to be conducted.

CHAPTER XXIV

OFFER OF LITERARY WORK

Two men were on the broad verandah steps as the smart buggy bowled along the drive. One, Robert Norton, who had come home unexpectedly, bringing with him a Mr. Scott, a middle-aged, intellectual-looking man.

After the introduction, while Mrs. Norton and Mr. Scott were talking, Anne studied his face with strong interest, while at the same time conversing with Robert. She remembered that many years before he had been the editor of the *Wallet*, and was now chief of the staff on a big Melbourne paper. In his letters to his mother Robert had often mentioned the kind hospitality the Scotts had shown him ; but his last letter, in which he told her that he was bringing Mr. Scott with him had mis-carried, and did not come to hand until the next morning.

The days following were pleasant ones to them all. Both walking and driving excursions were numerous, the Nortons wishing to show their visitor as much as possible of the beautiful hill country, for he told them that when he lived in Adelaide he had found scant opportunity of exploring beyond the suburbs. He was an extremely able, clever man, thoughtful and well read, and his town-jaded senses revived and sunned themselves delightedly in the simple farm life and exquisite natural surroundings.

Anne thought his disposition rather pessimistic, and her fresh young views of life indignantly repudiated his sometimes cynical ones.

One evening when they were all gathered round the

fire, the conversation of the three men turned on the future of the British race, Mr. Scott alleging that there were evident signs of coming decay, Robert partly agreeing, Mr. Norton, usually the quietest and most peaceable of men, hotly and excitedly maintaining the opposite. Mrs. Norton put in a word occasionally ; but Anne sat silent, hearing much of what was being said, but her thoughts flitting hither and thither, to home, to the problem of obtaining suitable employment, to the land where her father dwelt.

"One Britisher is equal to four foreigners any day," asseverated Mr. Norton. "Russians or Germans or Frenchmen, any of 'em. We can take 'em, sir, and knock 'em into a cocked hat. Our constitution is the freest and best in the world. We breed men, sir, men ; not poor under-fed creatures, fed on black bread and frogs."

Anne looked up, and she and Robert exchanged covert smiles.

"You, Mr. Norton, came direct from an English village out here ; but if you had been about London looking for copy, as I did when a young fellow, and seen the slums, and the slums of some of the great manufacturing towns, with their thousands and tens of thousands of wretched stunted-looking men and women, and the dens in which they live—dens you would not consider good enough for your swine ; if you had beheld miserable wretches soddening themselves with drink, the children clinging to the skirts of their half-drunken mothers, as they went in and out of the great flaring gin palaces ; if you had attended the police courts and seen the bruised, battered, ragged women asking protection from the worse than brutes they called husbands, or listened to the recital of unnamable crimes committed by both young and old ; you would be forced to the conclusion that our civilization is sinking as the great civilizations of Assyria and Egypt and Rome and Greece sunk."

"But we are altering all that. Look at the workmen's houses that are being built, and the raising of wages, and

the better education. The tight little island always comes out top, sir, and always will."

"There are, of course, many agencies working for good, but they are being outpaced by those on the side of evil. I am not a teetotaller, but I cannot help seeing that the network of public-houses overspreading not only Great Britain, but her Colonies also, is a huge fungus, sucking out the very life-blood of the people. Then we are becoming too merciful—maudlin would be a better term. Look how we pamper our criminals, making them as comfortable as possible while shut up; and letting them out as soon as may be, not only without any guarantee that they are reformed, but on the contrary, often positively certain that they will resume their careers of crime afresh the moment they get outside prison walls. In war it is just the same; we are so merciful towards the enemy, that after we have beaten him we give him every chance to reorganize and harry us; we shrink from utterly crushing him. Why, if the yellow races only knew their power, they could come down on us with their millions and sweep the board of Europe clean."

"Pshaw! Nonsense!" interjected Mr. Norton angrily.

"A horde like Tamerline's may yet cut up our effete civilization, root and branch," pursued Mr. Scott, ignoring the interjection.

Mrs. Norton, anxious to avert another explosion from her husband, turned to Anne.

"You are not giving us your opinion."

She roused herself with an effort to answer. "I do not agree with Mr. Scott."

"I should think not," snorted Mr. Norton. "No one with any sense would agree with such utter rot." Then, noticing his wife's upraised eyebrows and troubled look, he added, "No offence, sir, no offence; but I'm a Britisher to the backbone, and I don't like to hear my nation run down."

"Quite so. I'm a Britisher too; but I can't shut my eyes to facts."

"The old civilizations," Anne spoke quickly in answer to Mrs. Norton's appealing glance, "were totally different from ours in many important respects. In them the relations between man and man were acknowledged to be founded on selfishness; we have at least the ideal of universal altruism. Nine-tenths of the people then were slaves; we are a nation of free men and women. Their governing class looked on the masses as hopelessly, irremediably sunken, and made no effort to uplift them; we are constantly casting about for remedies. Among the ruins of ancient cities one finds everywhere evidences of detestable cruelty, but no hospitals, no orphanages, no asylums; we on the contrary are learning to take thought for all sorts and conditions of misery."

"Of course we do," said Mr. Norton triumphantly. "The British are a great people."

"Go it, Anne," said Robert encouragingly.

"The masses in the old civilizations were steeped in ignorance; they knew naught of the few philosophers and writers. The time is now close at hand when every one of our men and women will have enough education to open the treasure house of knowledge; and in a very few generations that must tell immensely. The women of Egypt and Greece, and even Rome, were most of them virtually slaves, and women are becoming more and more free every day; and I believe that women will be the chief factor in future in the cleansing and reforming of the world."

"Do you advocate the political woman?" he asked, surprised, for he had thought her so womanly; and a female politician was, to his mind, most unfeminine.

"I think," she answered steadily, though she flushed deeply under his astonished and satirical look, "that women should go anywhere and do anything where need is shown for them; their brooms and scrubbing brushes would often do certain work better than men's spades and rifles. This drink question you were quoting seems beyond the power of men to set right; let, then, women try their hand.

Give them equal political rights ; and let them band themselves together for the suppression of the drink traffic. Women, for the sake of their homes and children, would be far more emphatic in their protest, for they suffer more than men from the miseries caused by drink ; and it is men who support the beer shops, not women, at least in the Colonies."

" You are right there," nodded Mrs. Norton.

" Soon will occur something," she went on, " which has never happened before in the history of the world ; women will be given not only equal opportunities of education with men, but also equal political rights. Then whole peoples—not merely the British race, but all European peoples—will climb to the level where hitherto only the few have stood, and morality will enter more and more into political life, for it is an ever-growing political factor. The principles of justice and freedom which are among the great forces of Christianity are expanding, and are the leaven that is permeating, slowly I admit, but still surely, every race—black and yellow as well as white. The old civilizations had not the powerful lever of Christianity."

" The Christian churches, my dear Miss Cassels, have hitherto been too busy tearing at each other's throats to find time to uplift the world."

" Your reproach, as you know, is only partly true, and a better era is already dawning. Even in my short life I can see an improvement. Protestants are beginning to sink their differences and close their ranks, not only to defend themselves against the common foe, but to attack him in his strongholds. Catholics and Protestants will join together later on ; for there is no reason why people of every creed, or no creed, should not be at one in all social work, this drinking question for one."

Mr. Scott laughed. " Your Utopian forecasts are delicious, my young friend. You little know the radical differences which lie at the root of religious divergence, and still less do you understand the power of vested interest, which is the impregnable defence of one potent cause of

our decay : the one you have just mentioned—drink. All that a man hath will he give for his skin? Nay, verily, all that he hath will he sacrifice to his almighty vested interest, even his skin and soul.”

“ I am certain that the religious difficulty, and even,” and her lip curled, “ that associated with vested interests will be overcome in time. My own narrow experience has shown me how thin is the division really between people of different creeds. My father was a Congregationalist, my mother an Anglican ; we children attended both places of worship and went to a Methodist Sunday-school. A Quaker Meeting House adjoins our garden, and I know several of the fine men and women who belong there. One of my dearest friends is a Roman Catholic, another is a Jewess ; and they both devote their lives to philanthropic work. Another dear old friend is a Presbyterian ; and still another, one of the best men, and my father’s chief friend, is a Deist—some call him a free-thinker. In my school I have also been associated with Baptists and Unitarians and Plymouth Brethren, and all these I have found equally interested in whatever promised to promote the good of the community. Once I was brought into contact with a Parsee gentleman, and was astonished to find a breadth of view often lacking in Christians. He subscribed liberally, too, towards a fund for buying Christmas gifts for poor children.”

Mr. Scott smiled quizzically. “ I can understand the Parsee gentleman’s liberality ; when youth and beauty——”

“ Don’t talk nonsense, please,” interrupted Anne, bringing down her brows impatiently. “ You have been treating me like a reasonable being, though a woman ; continue to do so, please.”

“ Proceed, my dear Miss Cassels, proceed.” He waved his hand with pretended deprecation. “ But let me point out that you are speaking of the laity ; they might, no doubt, be brought to unite in good works if allowed ; but the hierarchy, the shepherds of the different flocks, are the ones who will prevent it. They are each and all so afraid of

losing souls—or shall we say probable subscribers to the funds that support them—that most of the time which might be given to seeking out and raising the downtrodden is employed in strengthening the ramparts that divide creed from creed and people from people.”

“Perhaps so, though it is not true of a large number. But in this free land of Australia the people themselves are the final arbiters, and by and by they will, if need arises, take matters into their own hands. What I want to point out is the broad basis of humanity underlying all the creeds. This is being acted upon by the tremendous power of the modern Press, and the easier means of communication opened up by the use of steam and telegraph. All these factors will let daylight in upon the dark places of the earth and banish the ignorance of each other, which is one of the chief obstacles to hold classes and creeds and nationalities apart. The belief that aggressive war is a crime, is growing, and the next century will see international law courts, as now there are national.”

“The abolishing of war, if it ever comes, which I doubt much, would tend to emasculate the strong fibre of the people.”

“No;” her eyes lighted up with eagerness. “In the daily Press do we not constantly see accounts of lives risked and lost in the effort, not to destroy life, but to save it? surely a nobler aim you will admit. Many an obscure sailor remains on the deck that is sinking under him so that the women and children shall have place in the boats, and many a life-boat crew face death on the chance of saving others. Many a train-driver stands by his engine to secure the safety of his passengers, knowing well that he himself must pay the forfeit. Many a miner fearlessly meets the deadly fire-damp so that he may rescue his imprisoned comrades. Many a physician saves his patient and then lies down to die of the disease contracted from him. Do missionaries and slum-workers and explorers lack courage? Never a call to heroism but heroes spring into the breach. The abolition of war would not abolish the passion for high

courage and self-sacrifice, but instead purify and raise it, for war brings the brute uppermost in man, and the brute is not capable of the highest form of courage."

"Well, perhaps so," he said, gazing thoughtfully into the fire. "But going back to the chief cause of decay in Great Britain, the drink traffic; what about the vested interests? That is the lion in the path of reform that will devour all your plans."

"The higher must drive out the lower."

"Unfortunately, we see the reverse every day."

"Yes, in our little lives. There is the ebb and flow of the waves, but the tide goes on rising. Does not all history show that in the end the fire of corruption feeds on itself, and the residue goes to the heap of good. Every evil contains within itself the germ of reform; for when vilness becomes rampant, people are forced to cast about for a remedy. There is something that ever calls to the noblest with insistent voice, to choose the better even though it means present loss. Going back to my own experience again, I have seen how a mere boy could deliberately choose poverty and give up the dearest desire of his heart, rather than buy it with profits made in the drink trade."

"Laurie," interpolated Mrs. Norton, nodding her head again.

"He must have been the one boy in the British Dominions then capable of making such a choice," said Mr. Scott, shrugging his shoulders.

"How do you know but that there are many such? Although you may not have discovered them. 'I, only I, am left alone to worship the true God,' cried Elijah, and yet there were seventy thousand with him. I believe there are numbers of men and women all around us, who if they could be made to realize what they are doing by supporting the drink traffic, would shake themselves free from the abomination. For myself," she paused, then said slowly, "You may say it is easy to talk of resisting a temptation that has not presented itself; but I would starve, yes, starve to death, rather than eat bread that I knew was

bought with the price of another's misery." And as they beheld the exaltation in her flashing eyes they knew that what she spoke was truth.

But Robert now interposed. "You two are doing all the batting, while we are kept out fielding. Mother, you had better send your patient to bed ; she has been talking too much and is getting hoarse."

"A nice way to put the gag on me ; but I suppose submission is the only thing left," said Anne with a little laugh and beginning to wind up her wool. Then she put it down again. "Just one word more, please, only this. Millionaires give enormous sums towards building model lodging-houses, free libraries and art galleries ; why should some of them not be induced to give towards a fighting fund for the suppression of the liquor traffic ? Lodging-houses and books and pictures are good things, but of what use are they to the thousands of drunkards we are manufacturing every day ? "

"But I don't want the liquor traffic suppressed entirely. I like an occasional glass of beer ; leave me that, Miss Casseles."

She looked at him fixedly, and under cover of the rattle of glasses of hot milk and plate of biscuits that Mrs. Norton was handing round, repeated in a low voice, "Take up thy cross daily." Then after a pause, "Might not that apply to you in this matter for the sake of others ? "

It was late the next morning before she left her room, for she had not slept well, and Mrs. Norton insisted on her breakfasting in bed. The menkind had driven to the city ; so she and her hostess lunched alone. In the afternoon, while Mrs. Norton was deep in the mysteries of apple jelly, and at the same time overlooking her new maid's first attempt at plucking and preparing a fat chicken, Anne took the opportunity to set forth on a long solitary ramble.

The hot sun brought out the fragrant smell of the carpet of dried gum leaves that crackled as she walked over them, a scent that never failed to bring back her childhood's wanderings in the Parklands. On the hill-side opposite

the Summit, where the woodcarter's axe had cleared the old forest, a fresh one was already springing up, and the plummy tops of the young growth shone in the western sunlight with all the varying shades, from orange to pale yellow, from dark crimson to pink, from mauve to purple. A blaze of glory that contrasted with the deep shadows in the green gully where the little creek babbled.

Every now and then she stopped, to stoop and watch some tiny insect at its work or play, to gaze at the wonder and beauty of a wild flower, or to listen to the bird calls ; but all the time there was an undercurrent of anxious thought as to how her future must be shaped, for she could see no definite way open.

Coming back two hours later, her skirts brushing the delicious scented purple lucerne, in her hands a basket of maiden-hair fern, moss and bracken, she saw Mr. Scott standing at the slip rails watching a pair of young ponies that were playing with each other, much as a couple of kittens would, prancing about, standing on hind legs, pawing and biting, then racing round and round the paddock, first one way then another, as hard as they could lay legs to the ground. Anne also stood to watch them ; and Mr. Scott told her that he would be leaving in the morning ; a letter just received had cut his holiday short. Then he said abruptly—

“ Do you ever write, Miss Cassels ? ”

Her even white teeth showed in the glimmer of a smile.
“ Why do you ask ? ”

“ Because if you have not tried you should do so. Last night I saw that you could think as few do, and that you can express your thoughts in conversation ; why not try writing, then ? ”

This time she laughed out loud in a way that puzzled him.

“ You quenched the desire to do so seven years ago.”

“ I ? I do not understand.”

“ When you were the editor of the *Wallet*. Do you remember ? But of course you do not. In short, I thought at that time I could scribble, and sent a poem and a story

to you. They must have been put in the waste-paper basket as I heard nothing further of them beyond an acknowledgment, so concluded my gifts did not lie in that direction."

"But you could only have been a child at that time," he said astonished.

"I was sixteen, nearly seventeen."

"A mere child. If I had had any idea! Did you sign your name?"

"I signed it 'Blue Flax.' You put a notice in the correspondence column, asking Blue Flax to forward her address. I did send it, but there was never anything more. Oh! how I used to scan that column, hoping against hope. For months and months the sight of the postman's red coat coming towards our house would put me in a fever of excitement; but there was never anything, and I submitted to fate. It was my second attempt at publication, for when I was fourteen I sent a poem to the daily paper, and that met with much the same reception. A year afterwards I saw a little poem published in that same paper, written by a girl of my own age. It was spoken of as something astonishing considering the youth of the writer, and I used to wonder if I had told the editor how old I was whether it would have made any difference."

"Of course it would," he answered in a tone of regret. "What a pity you did not. I suppose at the time you wrote to me I must have had an extra press of work, or the manuscript may have been put on one side and forgotten. The asking for your address showed I had some thought of accepting it. Seven years ago—yes, that was about the time I went to Melbourne; the change of editorship probably accounts for your disappointment."

"It was for the best, no doubt. At any rate it gave my vanity a good lesson; it survived the first failure, but the second quite crushed it—for a time at least." She spoke lightly, but he detected the flavour of past bitterness.

"What is past cannot be remedied; the future is in your hands. Try again, Miss Cassels, and I will see that

you have a fair field. Mrs. Norton has been telling me that it is necessary at present for you to lay aside teaching. If you can prove your ability to write—and I do not doubt it—I can promise you regular employment.”

Anne’s face shone. “It is good of you to give me such a chance. Strangely enough, I have been turning over in my mind the possibility of trying again.”

“That is right ; and for a start, write an article on the subject we were talking of last night. I will be magnanimous and give publicity to an opponent’s views. Besides, there will be always a chance of converting me,” he added, smiling quizzically.

Anne smiled too, right joyously. “Oh ! if I could, if I only could ; you have so much influence,” she said, clasping and unclasping her hands with excitement.

“You can make the effort ; and to tell the truth, I did not quite believe all I said last night. Mr. Norton with his true Briton’s partisanship was so amusing, and you were in such deadly earnest, as appears to be your wont,” and he smiled at her again, “that I was tempted to push you both. By the way, you must be prepared for cutting out and not be disappointed if only half your article is printed.”

“Should much less than that be accepted, I shall consider myself most lucky.”

Leaving him in the garden, she hurried in to tell Mr. and Mrs. Norton and Robert, but found them in no way surprised, for it was partly owing to their good offices that Mr. Scott had acted as he had done.

“Why, dearie,” said Mrs. Norton, “I always said to father that you could write a book if you liked. Whenever I got a letter from you when you were a little thing, father used to read it out to us two or three times ; it was so clever and always made us roar laughing.”

“It is to be hoped that won’t be the effect on the public of my first article,” said Anne demurely, as she kissed Mrs. Norton’s apple-red cheeks.

“Give it ’em hot, as you did last night,” counselled Mr. Norton.

“ You will succeed, as you always do with anything you take in hand,” said Robert. “ I wish I had you as a partner—in law I mean ” he added hastily, as his mother looked up from her sewing.

Anne went to her room, her heart full of thankfulness, and knelt down at the chair beside the open window for a long time. Presently she raised her face and looked out, still kneeling. At the old homestead, now picturesque in ivy and giant battle-roses that flung their incense at her ; at the apple trees laden with their golden and red burden ; at the quiet pastures where cattle were lying down ; at the forest-clad hills cutting the sky-line. Such a little time to look back on, and yet so long since her eyes first rested on the Summit. And her father who had been with her then—was he near her now, and had he helped her ?

CHAPTER XXV

A MESSAGE FROM THE FURTHER SHORE

THE article succeeded beyond expectation, and opened the way for a series, written like the first, on social topics. They were copied into papers belonging to the other colonies and attracted considerable attention. Many were the conjectures hazarded as to the identity of the writer, for this was kept secret. Both Anne and Mr. Scott agreed that the opinions expressed would carry more weight, if supposed to be written by a man.

It is a strange thing, but undoubtedly true, that a large section of the reading public, do not, on first publication, scan so much the reasonableness of what is written as the personality of the writer; and give or withhold their approval accordingly.

Mr. Scott's influence also obtained for her employment on an Adelaide paper. For this she tried her hand at fiction and published under her own name, meeting in that line also with success, so that by the end of the first year she found herself able to contribute a considerable share towards the family housekeeping. Her general health was re-established, but her voice did not regain its robustness, and she realized the mournful fact that its beauty had largely vanished. It was a great trial, but her new work wrought immense consolation. Teaching had always been a pleasure; now this large field for instruction gave play to her growing capacity. The sense of power that comes to the writer who is able to reach out a finger here and there and influence events, is at times almost an ecstasy. To know oneself as forming part of the grand procession of noble and unselfish souls,

who struggle and strive for the bettering of humanity, is an inspiration to still more strenuous effort. To be allowed an active participation in working for the uplifting of the world had long seemed to Anne the most desirable thing in life ; and lo ! her desire had been granted.

She was also able to devote a good many hours weekly to the coaching of Walter for a scholarship, offered in connexion with the infant Adelaide University and his final success in winning it was largely due to her. He was now able to begin the study of a course of medicine for which profession, principally in consequence of his sister's prompting, he had resolved to work. Her strong influence over him was a factor that continually helped to mould in him high resolve. Once, when she had heard him speak undutifully to his mother, she took occasion to draw him on one side and speak sternly of his thoughtlessness.

"Never, Walter, treat mother with lack of respect and reverence. The time, in all human probability will come, when you will see her die. Then, for every remembered word and act of omission and commission, your conscience will scourge you with scorpion whips. I know, for your nature is much like my own, and I am telling you from out my own experience."

The emotion in her face awed the boy, and made him resolve to abide by her counsel.

Often she sighed to herself, wishing the University had been in existence years before, for it had opened its doors as freely to women as to men. How she would have grasped at the chances given ! But still, she having missed it herself, perhaps made her even more enthusiastic over the widening of the gates of knowledge for other women. Also she hailed the rise of the Salvation Army about this time as a great factor in the enfranchisement of her sex from the bonds of custom and heredity ; for these women were given in their work precisely the same opportunities as men, and the Army was also, she believed, destined to become a powerful agent in the redemption of the masses from the enslavement of drink. Of all these matters she

wrote to Laurie, for she had taken her father's place since his death, as Laurie's correspondent for the family.

This year Jessie considerably extended her garden, and went in for cultivating flower seedlings and pot plants, for which a ready sale was found among the people in the environs, flower gardening there having become more and more a pastime and pursuit. Hugh was still on the same station and had been made an overseer.

Their mother lived a quiet restful life, consoled in her loneliness by the affection of her children ; but ever looking forward to rejoining him who had passed out of her sight.

About the same time that Walter won his scholarship, a legacy came to the Marshalls through the will of a distant cousin, whom neither had ever seen. It was sufficient, with what they had been able to save, to provide enough to retire on, and they were planning to build a cottage on the Terrace near the Cassels.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott had frequently asked Anne to pay them a visit in Melbourne, for the latter, a clever literary woman, much wished to meet her husband's protégée, of whom he was so proud. Accordingly in April Anne found herself domiciled with them in their pleasant villa on the outskirts of Melbourne. Here her old schoolfellow, Julia Cohen, came to see her. Julia's father had died some years before, and she was now a rich unmarried woman, able to carry out some of the ideas on which she had set her heart when a young girl, and Anne had found in her a strong sympathizer in her efforts to found an unsectarian league of women, vowed to combat the drink trade.

She enjoyed to the full the stir and bustle of the premier city, and the society of the artistic and literary circle of friends that the Scotts had gathered around them.

She was in her room, packing up and getting ready for the steamer which would leave the wharf the next afternoon, when one of the servants placed a telegram in her hand. She opened it lightly, thinking it was probably sent from the Adelaide paper in reference to some manuscript she had despatched the week before, but after the

first glance stood transfixed. The telegram was from Jessie, "Mrs. Marshall died last night." The full tide of being seemed to stop, and leave her standing on the borders of the other land. Her dear old friend had gone ! That thought held her for a time. But then came the remembrance of Mr. Marshall, and her tears fell fast as she dwelt on his desolation, for the anguish of parting was not all ; he could feel, she knew, no certainty of any future meeting, and through her own past experience she realized the frightfulness of suffering that he must be enduring. The separation caused by death, even when there is strong belief in future reunion, is terrible ; but death as a final parting from the soul's best beloved ! Can any words convey its horror ?

The first part of the voyage back proved a rough one ; but she was one of the few passengers who suffered little inconvenience from the stormy weather. Under other circumstances she would have enjoyed it, but the bereaved old man was ever before her imagination and her heart yearned over him in his unspeakable loneliness. The third night, wrapped up warmly, she sat on deck long after the other passengers had gone below. She had not slept well since the receipt of the telegram ; and preferred watching the sea tossing under the stars to lying in the close cabin.

At last, remembering that the vessel would arrive at Port Adelaide early in the morning, she went downstairs, and going to her berth lay awake for some time, looking forward almost with dread to meeting Mr. Marshall. To her passionate youthful soul, his age and grief appealed irresistibly, yet what comfort could she, or any one else give him ? Absolutely none. In utter loneliness he must tread with bleeding feet his thorn-strewn way.

Thinking thus she heard the clock strike eleven and on a sudden, sleep or trance enfolded her senses.

She stood on a grey misty plain that stretched out and lost itself in the vastness of distance. As she peered into the mist, one came from it, running straight towards her,

if the swift graceful movement that seemed more like flight could be called by that name. She saw and realized at once that it was her dear old friend. White clothing scintillating and shining fell around her, and bright light radiating from head to foot showed the beautifully moulded throat and arms and bare feet, the flesh like an infant's, with a warm pink flush through the snowy skin, and her face full of the fire and radiance of immortal youth. She ran with extended hands, and caught Anne's in hers as they met, with a firm close clasp, looking her meanwhile full in the eyes, while in her own countenance was that mingling of awe and wonder and ecstasy that Anne remembered so well in her father's face, during that previous vision.

No word was spoken, only the intense gaze, passing as from soul to soul. For a few moments they stood thus; then she turned her head on one side and looked downwards, and her eyes losing their ecstatic fire, filled with an indescribable yearning of love and sorrow. Anne's glance following hers, beheld as on a lower plane the black garbed mourner, sitting alone and silent, with hands folded on his knees, and eyes bent earthward, his whole attitude bearing the impress of age and despairing woe. While she looked the whole vision vanished, and Anne wide awake, lay still a moment, then struck a light and looked at her watch. It was three minutes past eleven.

Before noon on the following day she was at home. They had all been so bright and happy when she left, but now sadness like a thick cloud hung over them. Mr. Marshall's friends had not been able to get him to leave the abode where he and his life's partner had dwelt together so many years. He must, he said quietly in answer to their pleading, have a few days to himself to think, and would resolve later on his future course. His employers left him undisturbed, and had engaged a man to perform his duties.

Mrs. Marshall's death was sudden. She had been chatting gaily with her husband about a trip to New Zealand

that they had planned to take while their new home was in course of preparation.

"Mind, John dear, not to overtire yourself," she said to him as he kissed her before going out. "You are so bent on leaving everything spick and span for your successor that the poor man will be frightened, and imagine you have always kept things as they are now."

He laughed as he turned at the door to look at her. She had seated herself in her easy chair, and waved her hand with pretended mockery. Five minutes afterwards he returned to get something he had forgotten. She was still sitting there; but when he stooped to look at the still figure he saw that for the rest of his life's journey he must walk alone.

It was the day after her return that Anne went to see him. The vine on the wall had assumed its autumn livery of crimson and gold, and every now and then a little puff of wind sent some of the leaves whirling downwards. The plants in the painted barrels and tins had a neglected look, but the pigeons were sunning themselves and flying from yard to roof, from roof to cote, and every now and then sweeping in long circling flights round the buildings. Their trough was nearly dry she saw and the yard unswept.

First giving the pigeons a supply of water she turned to the sitting-room door, which was partly open; and no answer being given to her timid knock, she pushed the door wide, then instantly moved backwards as she saw who was seated there. He sat quite motionless, looking downwards at his clasped hands, just as she had known she would find him.

She knocked on the door again to announce her presence, and as he looked up at her with impassive face, went to him.

"Dear friend," she said quickly, as she took his hand. "I have a message for you."

He saw her eyes shining down at him through the tears that she was struggling hard to hold back, but the emotion that paled her face stirred no answering wave in his.

"A message?" he repeated after her in a dull, chill voice.

"Yes, listen." She sat down beside him, still holding his hand. "I want to tell you something that happened nearly two years ago, something of which I have never opened my lips to speak, though it changed all my outlook on life." Then she told him with attempted calmness, but interrupted often with choking sobs, of the terrible state of mind into which her father's death had cast her, and of the wondrous vision that had raised her from the horrible pit of remorse and despair. He listened courteously, without sign of interest. When at the end she stopped, trying hard to keep back the agitation that every now and then threatened to overmaster her, he stirred in his chair and said in cold, even tones,—

"It is kind of you to tell me of your mental experiences, my dear, and if they aided you in your trouble, I am glad; at least I shall be glad when I am able to realize anything but my own selfish feelings."

"Stay, there is something more, a direct message for you, I am sure, dear Mr. Marshall," and this time without break or pause the story of that later vision was poured forth. But again he looked at her coldly, she almost thought cynically.

"Inasmuch as it is your goodness of heart that has moved you to break through what is a very natural reticence, and to tell me all this, because you think it will comfort the old man, I thank you, my dear. But I do not believe that auguries and dreams have any solid basis. A lack of health, physical or mental, affects them; you have had doubtless, as every one has had, hundreds of fantastic dreams, to which you attached no importance."

But she interrupted earnestly. "These were no idle dreams, I am certain. They were visions of fact, revelations from the spirit world."

The flicker of a half scornful smile was on his lips.

"How can you prove it? That is the test. There is no proof."

"How could you, now, prove to any one sceptical on the point that—that——" she stopped, then went on determinedly, "that the one you loved best, loved you?"

His glance fell from her face.

"You could not, you know it. You have only the deep, passionate, unswerving, inward conviction. In this matter I, too, have the same absolute certainty of conviction; but I cannot prove it as a scientific fact is proved, simply because it is outside the range of what we in this world call science."

He did not answer and she went on.

"I am positively certain, and shall be while I have being, that my father came back to save me from madness or death, and I am equally certain that your beloved"—her voice trembled tenderly over the last word—"in some way knew of your suffering and sent you a message by me."

They both sat in silence a minute or two; then he looked up.

"Why should you believe that you have been singled out for this?"

"Why? I do not know. Why is one man born blind and another able to see the wonders of nature? The beauty and glory are always there, but one sees them, to the other they are a blank. Why is one man given genius, while another comes into the world an idiot? Only the God who makes it so can answer; but for myself I think that in the new life, sight will be given to the blind, and intellect to the witless. God is just, and being so, He cannot ordain anything but justice in the final summing up."

Again they sat in silence for a while, then he spoke. "Take comfort, my child, I am not ungrateful, and you have comforted me, though I cannot see things as you, for I am made differently and cannot believe unless there is ocular and tangible proof. Belief or unbelief in evidence for things unseen, things antecedently improbable, transcending experience, entirely depends upon the quality of the mind which contemplates it." He paused and sighed deeply.

“But I shall always find pleasure in thinking of my Bessie as you saw her in your dream, for it was a beautiful one, and perhaps, who knows—for I cannot disprove its truth even if I would, and God knows I would not, any more than you can prove your belief—there may be truth in your vision.”

He stopped again, then said musingly—

“It is just what she might have done, if she lives, gone to you because she knew that I am blind and deaf to what is called the spiritual. I am not accountable for the want in my nature, if it is a want, any more than the physically blind and deaf are. This much I must believe, that a spirit such as hers cannot pass into nothingness, and it is of course possible that she and I may be permitted to find each other again. But we can never know it. Belief in things unseen there may be, but not knowledge, not knowledge.”

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HUGE OCTOPUS

THE Port train was rapidly nearing the Adelaide railway station, and Laurie, after an absence of more than five years from his native city, was noting some of the changes that had taken place during the last two decades. The Torrens had been dammed and a fine sheet of water filled the wide, sandy reaches over which he used to wander, but where now boats were gliding. Two crews of University students came pulling swiftly by, while their comrades ran cheering along the banks, that instead of presenting steep, rugged fronts, were levelled and the sloping sides planted with grass, and fringed with English trees. There was a rotunda further up, some one in the carriage said, where a band contest would take place in the afternoon, and where thousands of people would cluster on the lawns, or wander under the limes and chestnuts that bordered the lake.

Fine new buildings towered aloft between the four Terraces of Southern Adelaide, and the surrounding plantations that were only in course of making when he left, now embosomed the "white city," as it was beginning to be called. The exquisite living blue that canopied all was just as beautiful as his memory, under the duller European skies, had pictured it, and the Australian sun shone gladly as of yore.

A fellow traveller, a young Englishman, doing a little globe-trotting, asked where the best hotel could be found, and Laurie went with him to show him the way.

There was to be a public half holiday in the afternoon,

when most places of business would be closed, and throngs of people set free to spend the rest of the day in the open air. This morning the pavements were crowded with foot passengers coming from, and going to, a levee that was being held at Government House, while landaus, broughams, phaetons and buggies filled with fashionably-dressed occupants, drove in the roadway. The Englishman was amused by his guide's description of how, when a child, he used to run out to see the Governor's carriage, then the only one in the Colony, and could scarcely believe that bullock drays, drawn by long teams of bullocks, slowly meandering down this same street, were a common sight at that time.

Signs of prosperity and advancement were everywhere. Vacant lots had been built on, handsome new shops filled the places of former little old erections, the plate glass windows were dressed artistically, and jewellers, drapers, and furnishing houses offered almost irresistible inducements for fat purses to become lean ones, and, as expense was no object, the Englishman said, Laurie selected what he had known as the chief family hotel in Adelaide; a new wing he found had been added to it, and the rooms richly furnished.

With some difficulty, detaching himself from his travelling acquaintance, on promise of seeing him again in the evening, he started in the direction of North Adelaide. Horse trams had taken the place of cabs, and one now approaching, he stopped it and climbed to the top. He saw presently the rotunda, with its lawns and well-kept riverside walks. To the right a carriage drive, between rows of cork elms, led to the Botanic Park. A fine new bridge spanned the Torrens, and among the trees on the north side there were glimpses of the fence and pavilion of a cricket oval, while further on the cathedral reared its lofty walls. All so changed from the Parklands where the camp fire of the blacks gleamed at night between giant gums, and where he fished in the Torrens pools, and mushroomed and bird-nested amongst the native grass and scrub. Still,

though he sighed for the old, he confessed that the new Adelaide was indeed beautiful, with its towers and spires gleaming white amid the encircling verdure and against the background of purple hills.

He got down at the corner. On the familiar Terrace several villa residences had taken the place of what had been grass paddocks when he left, and even the white cottage did not look the same, for though the old building was preserved intact, several new rooms had been built on, and the garden had budded and blossomed into fresh phases.

With heart beating fast he went through the little gate, into the familiar old porch now sweet in wreaths of pink cups and long white sprays. But a strange girl answered his knock, and to his deep disappointment told him that part of the family had gone to the seaside and part to the Summit, and none would return until the next morning.

Laurie turned disconsolately away, half inclined to start for the Summit also, but his promise to the Englishman barred the way. It was unfortunate that he had not been able to write by the previous mail, and let them know that various circumstances had determined him upon returning to his native land three months before the period fixed. Should he send a telegram? No, he would wait and give them a surprise. After a few moments' further cogitation, he bent his steps in the direction where Catherine Muir dwelt. Change was there also, for the woman who came to the door told him that Miss Muir had removed higher up in the street. Going where directed, he saw that the house was much larger than the old one, and that the taking of boarders had been added to the dress-making business, for a card to that effect was in one of the windows.

Catherine's greeting was of the warmest, and in response to his inquiry about the lodgings, said that her health had suffered from so much sedentary employment, so that she had lately given it up for this mode of making a living; that she had a vacancy and would be only too glad if he would fill it. Her hospitable kindness gave him his first home

feeling, and after partaking of an excellent luncheon, and having a long chat about old friends and acquaintances, he set out for a ramble among his boyhood's haunts.

He looked in at the old tinsmith's, where Hugh used to sell his lead, and at the bakehouse where the Sunday dinners were baked ; went round by the cathedral and the white cottage again, and the Quaker Meeting house, and the Mitchells' dwelling that they had now left ; through Palmer Place and by the Bishop's Court, and the church he and his grandmother had attended. Then he walked back by the *Queen's Head*, and going to the rear, looked long and earnestly across the yard to his old room.

The smell of beer brought back by association a flood of memories, some sweet, some bitter. A ragged, bloated looking woman with an infant in her arms came out, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand, and some men lounging around the trough laughed and jeered among themselves as she disappeared. "Thank God," he said with a shudder as he wended his way to the top of Montefiore Hill, that he had been able to shake himself free from profiting by the degradation of his sister woman.

The old seat where he and Mark had sat was still there, and a clump of wattles in full bloom grew near. The strains of the distant band floated pleasantly to his ears, but he felt no inclination to join the gay throng he saw gathered round the rotunda ; instead, throwing himself on the grass, he gave himself up to a review of the past and present. What a little time it seemed, since he went with Anne to look at the people going to the fruit and flower show held in a big tent not far from where the rotunda now stood, and heard for the first time a brass band. He would never forget the lighting up of her face, and her dancing step when a martial air was played, and the intensely mournful depths of her eyes when the strains of "Auld Robin Gray" floated to them. Three not very good brass instruments gave her heaven's own music.

He had written to her immediately after tidings of Mr. Cassels' death and her own illness reached him, and as

soon as she was well enough to reply she had done so. From then they had corresponded regularly, at first merely a friendly news chat, but as time went on, the longings and aspirations that moved the depths of each young soul crept into their letters; so that they had come to know more of each other's true being than could ever have happened in ordinary intercourse.

Time and absence had but strengthened Laurie's love for Anne, and she, he was convinced more and more, was his soul's true mate, though she might never be brought to recognize it.

Fragmentary rumours had reached him of her various reputed suitors, but as far as he could gather, to all she had turned a deaf ear. Some of them said that she was of a cold nature and incapable of love, but Laurie did not make that mistake.

He had come back with the record of a brilliant medical course, and a highly successful year's work in a hospital, where he had received an important appointment, immediately after gaining his degree, and he thought he saw his way clear to attaining equal success in the Colonies, for whose grand, free, national and social life he yearned.

He was determined to again try his luck with Anne; though it would be safer, he thought, not to be too precipitate. He would meet her as a comrade and friend, and bide his opportunity. He must also make an attempt to see his grandmother, though he had little hope that she would receive him.

So with his head pillowed on the green turf, and breathing in the golden airs that blew around him, he mapped out his future course.

Evening found him walking down the streets, now lit with gas, instead of the dim old oil lamps, to keep his appointment. Some one touched his arm, and turning round, Sergeant—or rather as he soon found—Inspector Arnold, looking not a day older than when they met in Central Australia, gave him a pleased surprise. They stood

a few minutes talking, then at Laurie's invitation, the Inspector accompanied him.

They found the Englishman sitting alone in a luxuriously furnished smoking-room. All the other men he told them had turned out to theatre or concert room. He was puffing at a big cigar and had a decanter and glasses on the table beside him. He was about twenty-six, and had been the rich squire of his village, living since his father's death alone with his widowed mother, for he had neither brother nor sister. A weakness of constitution had prevented his attending a public school or University, and during the past year he had been advised to take a sea trip, to fend off a threatened chest complaint. His want of health had led to his leading a comparatively secluded life, and accounted for a certain boyish freshness and ignorance of the world, not usual in a man of his age. He was inspired by an enthusiastic admiration for Laurie, who had nursed him through a week's illness on board ship, and who had, partly by persuasion, partly by the influence of his stronger will, induced him to give up coddling and go in for fresh air, sunshine and exercise; the three things Laurie assured him, that were essential to best combat his incipient complaint; and already he felt a far different man from the semi-invalid who had left England.

He jumped up to shake hands with both, though it was such a short time since he had seen Laurie.

"I know it's of no use to ask you to whisky, old water drinker," said he, "but"—taking up the decanter—"you, Inspector, have, I hope, more regard for the good things of life, than this ascetic here?"

He raised his eyebrows at Arnold's refusal, "You don't mean it—another water drinker. Well! well! How many more of you in Australia?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "However a wilful man, etc., you know. Have a cigar then? These are none too bad, and there is one blessing, our friend Dr. Leigh here has not sworn off the fragrant weed, that is a saving grace; and take him for all in all, he isn't a bad old sort,"

and he good-humouredly clapped Laurie on the back as he passed his chair.

Their conversation drifted hither and thither, principally about incidents of the voyage, the young Englishman's impressions of Adelaide and his future plans. Then he turned to Laurie.

"Tell you what, old man, I saw something at table d'hôte to-night that would have made you more rabid on your teetotal business than ever. There was a squatter and his wife from what they call the back blocks, the waiter tells me ; stacks of money, both common as ditch water. The way they put away champagne, the woman as well as the man, did surprise me, I must confess ; and little kids three of them, got it too. The woman was half seas over before she left the table, the man was more hard headed, but had about as much as he could carry, and the kids were quarrelsome ; might have been sleepiness but might have been the drink, seeing they haven't got seasoned like their papa and mamma."

"Ryans from Umberrumbeka," said the Inspector. "They have been down a month. Last week they had a row smashed some of the furniture and the landlord threatened he would call us in. But he would think a long time before doing it, for they are among his best customers ; and as they have a suite of rooms to themselves he can generally manage to keep them from annoying the other boarders."

"Keeps his hotel respectable ?"

"He thinks so, no doubt. A drunken man and woman fighting behind double doors that shut in the noise, instead of making a show of themselves in the bar, or street, is less embarrassing to other people. But respectable ! Um ! depends on what folks call respectable. Can vice ever be respectable ?"

The Englishman laughed. "You are of the way of thinking of our friend here, I see," and he indicated Laurie by a movement of his head. "How he used to hold forth to me on the drink question as we paced up and down the

deck, and listened to the bar tipplers down below. I wonder how you would act if you were at the head of the police force."

"I only wish he were," said Laurie. "A Commissioner carrying out the Licensing Act strictly could work a revolution in the conduct of the drink traffic, defective as the law now stands."

"A revolution in public opinion is what is needed first," said Arnold. "A consensus of public opinion that would force the magistrates and J. P's. to convict on fair evidence. At present the majority of them, wherever possible, favour the publicans; and give little encouragement for the police to be active in trying to bring offenders to justice; for five times out of six, the case will be given against them on some trifling technicality or other."

"Well, certainly, from what I have seen and heard to-day, your Colony is keeping pretty good pace with the old world in this matter of drinking. My waiter told me that last week a Government official, high in the service, was here for one of his periodic drinking bouts. Stayed a fortnight, and then they had to get him taken to a padded room in the lunatic asylum; a nice little game he goes in for about once in every twelve months. But it seems the same everywhere; men make beasts of themselves because they don't stop when they have had enough. Why, bless my soul, I can always stop, and I don't see why any man can't, if he has any resolution about him."

Laurie smiled pityingly at the other's innocent inexperience.

"When a drinker gets to a certain stage, he has, as a matter of fact, no resolution, his passion for drink blows him hither and thither like a withered leaf. When his blood is filled with the fever of the drink craze, he can no more help drinking than the delirious scarlet fever patient can help trying to quench his burning thirst."

"It may be so. I have not studied the question. But there have always been drunkards, as there have always been fever patients.

“Perhaps so, perhaps not. We cannot go very far back in the history of the human race. But one thing is certain, you can allow your town to become so insanitary that fever runs rampant, and you can multiply your manufactories for drunkards to such an extent that the wonder is, not that so many become hopeless dipsomaniacs, as that any escape. Look at this hotel for instance, it is considered one of the most respectable in Adelaide, and does really cater to comfortably board and lodge travellers ; but the bar attached brings in the most profit.”

“There are three of them,” nodded the Englishman. “One upstairs here, with some jolly pretty girls for barmaids.”

“Exactly so, the girls are baits to lure fellows to drink. But what I was going to say is this ; if what is called a really first class hotel like this is busy manufacturing dipsomaniacs, while keeping up an appearance of decency and respectability, what must the low class ones do ? that are mere drink shops, and that make no pretence to qualms of conscience, but frankly express themselves as caring nothing for the bodies, leaving alone souls, of the men and women who are the products of their manufactory.”

“Dr. Leigh is right,” said Arnold. “Half the public-houses in Adelaide are merely drink shops ; numbers of them have no lodgers from one year’s end to the other, nor do they want them. Let a country visitor go and order a cup of tea, and see how the landlord or landlady will look. No person accustomed to well-cooked food wants to go a second time for a meal to many of these so-called hotels, and yet these people are licensed victuallers ; that is, people who are licensed to provide and sell victuals as well as drink. It is even worse in the country districts ; people unable to obtain comfortable lodgings for the summer months, and so-called licensed victuallers bluffing them by extortionate charges or inferior accommodation ; or even candidly refusing to take lodgers. A snug little bar trade, that is the desideratum.”

"But," said the Englishman, "I have been looking through one of your daily papers for likely places of excursion; and I saw any number of both town and country hotel advertisements, "first class table, excellent stabling; traps meet train and mail."

The Inspector closed one eye significantly. "There are such things as Licensing benches, and nowadays a temperance man sometimes gets on them. Lots of the advertisements are for their benefit, or at least the benefit of the green 'uns."

"I see, I see."

"I am just now starting on a round of some of the hotels to collect certain information for my Department, and if you gentlemen would like to go with me, I shall be glad of your company," said he, rising.

The Englishman accepted the invitation with alacrity, and Laurie thought he might as well fill in the rest of the evening in the same way.

"Some of the temperance people are starting hotels on their own account where alcohol is not sold, are they not?" queried the Englishman, as they walked along. "Is there anything of the sort in Adelaide, Inspector?"

"Yes, one has lately been opened, but temperance hotels are dreadfully handicapped in company with those where alcohol bars bring in such a heavy revenue. One or two may be made to pay in Adelaide, but in most country towns it would be useless, under present conditions, to try. Should the time ever come when prohibition is the law of the land, or the local authorities step in to take the trade in drink into their own hands, so eliminating private profit, the temperance hotels and coffee houses would then have a fair chance. Of course one or two generations trained during childhood and youth in temperance principles would mean a demand for temperance victuallers, and a supply would naturally follow."

"By the way," he continued, turning to Laurie, "do you remember that night we camped out together, that you strongly advocated women taking up the running?"

Well, they have begun here in Adelaide. A Miss Cassels who writes for the press is a prominent figure."

"Old and ugly, I suppose?" queried the Englishman.

"Not at all. On the contrary, young and very pretty. I was present at a meeting where she spoke, and, by George, she can speak too. A vessel had been wrecked on the Australian coast the week before; it was proved that the officer in charge was drunk, and ran her right on to a reef and over fifty people were drowned, many of them women and children. Miss Cassels was eloquent on that and other disasters that had lately happened through drink. She quite carried the people away. A strong league of temperance women on the lines you foreshadowed, strange to say, has been formed. Did you happen to know Miss Cassels?"

"She is an intimate friend of mine," answered Laurie briefly.

"Wait a minute here, I want to reconnoitre before the publican catches sight of me."

In a narrow street, they had approached a low class public-house, from which bacchanalian sounds issued. A flaring gas lamp inside showed distinctly what was passing. There were a number of men around the bar; and beside one of them stood a miserable looking woman, two shrinking, half-starved looking children holding to her skirts.

"Do, Jack," the woman pleaded, "do give me a shilling or two for the children and me, we are so hungry."

For answer the half drunken wretch, turning round, struck her a blow that stretched her at his feet. With a deep-throated exclamation the Englishman sprang forward, while Arnold blew a whistle that brought two policemen to his side. In a few minutes the drunkard was on his way to the police station, his wife taken to the hospital in a cab, and the frightened, sobbing children also sent where they would be cared for."

"The unmitigated ruffian," exclaimed the excited Englishman between his teeth.

"The natural product of our licensing system, my dear

sir," answered Laurie. "A pleasant glass does not seem so very pleasant, does it, when it is mixed up with this sort of thing?"

That night they visited scores of public-houses, some called high-class, some low, and many intermediate. There were billiard saloons and card rooms and music halls and dancing saloons attached; and in most of the bars there were bedizened and bejewelled barmaids, who smiled sweetly on them as they entered; as they would have smiled at the oldest reprobate, or the most callow youth going, provided either had money to spend.

In some bars and parlours, mournful wrecks of women were beheld. There were rags and vice and misery side by side with fine clothes and smug faces and apparent respectability. But all these establishments possessed in a greater or lesser degree one feature in common—the manufacture of drunkards.

"Drink," said Laurie as they walked back about midnight to the Englishman's hotel, "is a huge octopus, ever busy day and night, reaching out and strangling one here, another there, continually of our best and brightest. From hundreds and thousands of homes a wail rises up, such as rent the air when the destroying angel passed through the land of Pharaoh, and the fathers and mothers, and husbands and wives, and sisters and brothers, instead of falling upon the hideosity and hewing it to pieces, nourish and pet it, keeping it sleek and fat, ready for its work. To this end we set up public-houses at every corner; to this end we keep barmaids to entice; to this end we extend the hours of trade beyond those of every other trade; to this end we enlarge hospitals and poor-houses and lunatic asylums to receive the waste bodies that are left after the souls have been crushed and mangled out of them; to this end we make much of those who have accumulated huge fortunes by the help of the devil octopus."

"It certainly is a queer thing," said Arnold, "that the sale of poisons by chemists is strictly supervised, and yet all round us men can kill their neighbours by

the poison of alcohol. Then, instead of punishing the poisoner, we punish the poisoned, calling them drunkards and shutting them up in prisons to herd with thieves and murderers, and outcasts of every description."

The Englishman was walking between them, with his eyes cast moodily down; now he raised them.

"What you have shown me to-night has, I confess, staggered me. Almost I could find it in my heart to stand beside you two on this question."

"I wish you were not almost, but altogether such as we are in the temperance cause," answered Laurie.

"Well, who knows, but I might be some day. A glass of good ale, or whisky and water goes down very pleasantly; but when one begins to consider that it assists in upholding what we have seen to-night,—um, there is the rub."

He shook hands with them, and whistling softly, walked into the hall, for this, being a public holiday, was a permit night with the Adelaide public-houses, and most of them would, by the sanction of the law, ply their trade until three o'clock in the morning. Why, no one knew, for certainly no one benefited by the permit system but the publicans.

As they turned away Arnold said to Laurie, "I think you have gained a convert there, Dr. Leigh."

CHAPTER XXVII

UNION OF SOULS

MR. MARSHALL, Jessie and Walter came back the next morning, but Mrs. Cassels and Anne did not return until the afternoon. The latter had brought with her a wreath and cross of wild flowers, and leaving Mrs. Norton to drive her mother home, she took the bus that started from King William Street and travelled in the direction of the beautiful North Road Cemetery.

It was another perfect Australian day, blue skied, sun bathed. As she entered the grounds she caught sight in the distance of several gardeners at work, watering the grass and flowers, and weeding the paths. She looked around with chastened pleasure at the quiet God's acre, where the wild notes of birds mingled with hum of bees buzzing among the long sprays of white roses that seemed waving in every direction, and where the wattle "trembled twixt shadow and shine" over the closely shaven grass, and beside the dark foliage of the pines. All so peaceful, yet with no suggestion of dreariness.

She made her way to the plain stone whereon her father's name was recorded, and stepped over the enclosing low iron fence. It was not long before everything was in order: the violets and roses lovingly tended; the edges of the tiny path of small white shells made perfectly straight; the little patch of buffalo grass clipped short and the cross and wreath placed above. Then she went to a seat near where she could look at the beloved name, and gave herself up to undisturbed thought.

Since the previous day a tumult of feeling had possessed

her, but was all the stronger for being hidden under a calm exterior. In the morning Mrs. Norton received a letter from Robert, enclosing one from an English University chum, who wrote that Laurie was on the eve of being married, and starting to Australia for a honeymoon trip; when he would return to join in practice as junior partner a noted London doctor.

Mrs. Cassels sighed to herself over the downfall of what had always been a secret hope, and glanced at Anne, who after listening to the reading of the letter, had gone on painting from a spray of fern and buttercups propped on the table before her. To have lived to see Anne in Laurie's care would have fulfilled one of her dearest wishes; but evidently it was not to be, and perhaps her daughter would always prefer in the future, as she had in the past, a celibate life. So she chatted with Mrs. Norton over the pros and cons of the news: regretting that Laurie was not going to settle in Australia; wondering if Mrs. Johnstone would be moved to take any notice of the marriage; what the bride was like, and so on; in all of which chit-chat Anne joined unmoved, but desperately longing to get away by herself and think things over.

So now the time had come; the gardeners had finished their tasks and departed; and she sat alone, chin in hand, her eyes resting on the far-off hills, face to face with her heart's deep disappointment.

She was cast in the mould of the women who are never completely satisfied unless they are assured of being necessary to at least one person's happiness, and whose undivided love they possess and return.

In each soul there are depths that only God can touch. As far as that part of one's being is concerned it dwells absolutely alone, shut in from all others, in its holy of holies. But there is yet another sanctuary, where twin souls, blessing and being blessed, may stand together, apart from all the rest of the universe, and into whose sweet dual solitude no third can ever intrude. Some never attain that bliss, either through defect of nature or force of circum-

stances. Such lives may be useful and happy, but they have missed the alchemist's touch that transforms the commonest materials of daily life into pure gold.

And the lot of these latter would be her lot, thought Anne. Her father's death had left a want that no one else had completely filled. Her mother, her dear mother, loved her dearly; but she loved equally well her other children, and Hugh most of all. There were her brothers and sister, but the time must come when Walter, like Hugh, would necessarily go into a world apart from hers; and she could see it would not be long before Jessie left the home nest.

For years past she had cherished belief in the existence of an absolutely faithful, undying love, that she had only to put out her hand and take. When she refused Laurie she felt that she might be losing the chance of a lifetime; and year by year, through their long correspondence, she saw more and more clearly his rare nobility and lovable-ness, and at last realized that her old, calm, sisterly affection had become merged in a love equally strong and unquenchable as his. Not a love like her childish one, for an ideal that had never existed, but a love based firmly on the deepest respect and reverence; the only form of the passion that can last, not merely through the wear and tear of time, but also through the eternities.

Some months before a report had reached her that Laurie was engaged to an English girl—the daughter of wealthy people who had known his father, and who had sought out the rising young surgeon. At first she smiled at the rumour; but when Robert's correspondent wrote fuller particulars, saying the young lady acknowledged the engagement, and he had seen the two together the previous day at an art gallery, her faith wavered.

She knew with what magical quickness a small spark kindles into flame at the breath of rumour; but singularly enough there was no letter from Laurie that mail, nor the one following either. Next month a very short epistle arrived, making no allusion to the hiatus in his correspondence,

but saying he had only time to write briefly as he was very busy, and would probably spring a surprise upon her before long. So the chill doubt grew. Why should she think that Laurie would elect to spend his life alone, when she had never given him the slightest hint of the immense change that had taken place in her feelings towards him? And how did she know but what that old passion of his had worn itself out? "I shall never cease to love you, even if I live to be a hundred," he had said; but time and absence change most men; why should they not have done their work on him? Perhaps he felt a certain embarrassment in telling her, and that might account for his neglect to acquaint her with his engagement.

All this had of late made her life, in spite of its brilliant success, seem a lonely one. The interest of her literary labours was great; the joy of earning a sufficient income to make her mother comfortable and assist her young brother was great also; and her heart continually swelled with thankfulness because she had been permitted to join in definite work for raising the status of her fellow women, and for the bettering of the race.

But her heart also cried out for the love that now she was assured would never be hers. Her faith in the unseen, and belief in God's directing Hand, had become ground into her being. That unforgettable first vision might at times pale and fade through the pressure of everyday life, but ever at the shock of recognized doubt it sprang into full vigour. Like the needle that points to the pole, it might oscillate and swing back and forth through the intervention of other forces; but when once they were spent it resumed its steady pointing.

So now she said to herself, that there must be a purpose in this trial. Just as there had been a purpose in her training in poverty, to give her grit and self-reliance; a purpose in the dreadful grief over her father's death, so that she might be equipped with faith and hope; a purpose in the denial of the education of her artistic cravings, and the loss of her voice, so that she might be guided to the

choosing of her present vocation, where she could render better service to mankind.

The sweet joys that cluster round a woman's love might never be hers ; so much the more must she labour for those other women whose love, having once found fruition, had afterwards been made a misery and desolation, through the hideous vices rampant in the world. God had given her a power in pen and voice ; and perhaps it was necessary for their full use that she should stand alone, keeping undivided strength for the better fight against the powers of evil to which she stood committed.

Through the afternoon she sat there, praying for strength to combat the jealous aching longings that filled her heart, trying to realize that she must train herself to look on Laurie again as her brother, and resolving to fill the days and nights of her future even more than in the past with working and striving for others.

Some great tears fell and splashed on the hand that lay in her lap, and she hastily raised her handkerchief, for a footstep warned her that one of the gardeners was returning. She hoped he would not come near where she was sitting, for her throat felt constricted by the deep sob that strove for utterance, and which she was trying with all her might to keep back. But the footsteps came straight to where she sat, and paused beside her. Then she raised her still tear-filled eyes.

"Laurie," she cried, and how it was neither knew ; he stretched his arms towards her, the next moment she was gathered within their shelter.

"Do you know what this means ?" he asked presently, after he had in silence kissed lips and eyes and hair.

Then she started back, seeking release ; but he held her fast.

"I forgot, I forgot," she exclaimed confusedly. "They said you were going to be married."

"So I am, just as soon as ever it can be managed," he laughed joyfully, "and this is my very wife to be that I am holding. That is why I asked if you knew what this meant.

You could not be Anne if you raised hopes you were not ready to fulfill."

"But is there not some one in England?"

"Your mother has been telling me all about that story. There was not the slightest truth in it. Miss Vaughan and I were friends, that was all. She is rather a hoyden, talks a lot, and took pleasure in mystifying Robert's friend: just for fun as she told me. I was annoyed all the same, though I never dreamt of how much had been made of it, and that it would get out here. You have been and always will be my one and only love."

"Oh!" and a deep sigh of relief escaped her.

"I have heard stories about you too, Anne, that kept me on the tenter-hooks. Over and over again rumours reached me that you were engaged, or on the point of being married. I was afraid of Will Mitchell that day at Mount Lofty; it was easy to see how it was with him."

"None of the stories were true. I believe," she hesitated shyly, "since that day at Mount Lofty I——"

"Yes?"

"I have known it would be you or nobody."

"Really, truly?" he queried with deep delight; but her look satisfied him.

"If I had only known it, I would have come back a year ago; but you would not condescend to give me even the faintest hint," and he shook her playfully.

"You might have changed; I could not be sure you would not," and in answer to his reproachful look she added hastily, "Besides, I wanted to be quite certain of myself, for, you see, I knew before what love was," and blushing painfully she told him of her childish love for Will.

He listened, astonished. "Never mind, sweetheart; all is well that ends well."

"Ah! but, Laurie, you cannot think how I wish I had always been like you, and never cared for any one else."

"You are a darling to tell me that; but if I am satisfied, dear, you need not worry. Had you been engaged to him,

and let him kiss you, as I am doing now," he stopped his speech a minute to illustrate, "why that would have been different. As it is, it was after all only an imaginary love," and he kissed her again.

She heard him, partly comforted. But always when her thoughts went back, she would if she could in her desire to be wholly Laurie's have erased that experience from her past.

When at last they rose to go, they both turned and looked in silence at her father's name.

"I am so glad it happened here," she murmured in a low voice, "in the spot specially dedicated to his memory. I know he will rejoice, for he thought so much of you;" and then, moved through her exaltation of feeling, she told for the second time of her vision, half afraid that, like Mr. Marshall, he might treat it with scorn or pity.

But Laurie heard with deepest sympathy and comprehension.

"Be grateful, my dearest, for what was vouchsafed to you is given to very few. And of this be very certain, that it was not sent for yourself alone, but also to strengthen you for your work in the world."

"Then you, a scientific man, do not think that it is impossible to recognize messages from the unseen world?"

"No, most emphatically no. True, our present knowledge gives us no means of verifying such messages; the seen and the unseen cannot be discerned by the same methods; but equally it is impossible for science to prove that no such means of communication exists between this side of the boundary and the further one; nor that the time may not come when we can scientifically verify them. To my mind science positively affirms a creative and directive power, a something continually watching over us; and believing also firmly, as I do, that our individuality endures, and that, therefore, our thoughts must turn back after we have crossed the bounds of time to those who still dwell within its shadows, what more likely than that on certain

special occasions we should be allowed to communicate with them. Individual experiences of all ages affirm that this has been so."

"But why do they so seldom occur?"

"Ah, why? We know not. But I think it is very likely because instead of being helpful, they would, if often repeated, tend to incapacitate us for ordinary life. We are each placed on this little planet to accomplish a certain work that no one else can perform; and to do it effectually it is necessary to concentrate upon that work our thoughts and energies. A certain order of mind like your own has power to bear the brightness of the unseen without being blinded to ordinary commonplace duty; but with others it would not be so, and these must wait to be freed from their present habitation before beholding even a glimpse of the higher life."

She looked at him with happy eyes, and her woman's heart throbbed exultingly as she listened. The boy Laurie! What a grand wide-minded man he had become; and he her very own, her stronger other self!

"Another reason," he continued, "I imagine, is that most minds are not receptive to such communications; just as the eye can only behold what it brings with it the power to see. I have heard it illustrated in this way: 'Something or somebody desires to play upon a pianoforte or stringed instrument, when lo! some of the notes are dumb, some of the chords snapped; there can be no response to the idea in the mind of the would-be player.'"

It was through fairyland they wandered homewards; the foretaste of Paradise, vouchsafed but once on earth. Arm closely linked in arm, they walked awhile in silence, interrupted only by dumb expression of their thoughts.

"How this little hand has altered my life," he said at length, looking down at the one clasped in his. His gaze lingered on the dark eyes looking unutterable things, on the little curls that waved about her brow, at the softly coloured cheeks and firm-cut mouth and chin. "That day you placed it in mine as we crossed the street,

you led me to a turning-point that completely changed my ideas ; and now it leads to a golden future."

"And you, Laurie, from what did you not save me ? If you had not shown me of what a noble man, strong to do right, is capable, I might not have seen poor Will's weaknesses. The contrast was sapping my infatuation long before the need for decision arrived."

"Poor beggar," said he, squeezing the hand in his, and stopping to again take toll of her lips. "Is it true that he lately married a barmaid ?"

"Quite true. It was just after they had settled in their beautiful new house, and Mrs. Mitchell nearly went frantic when she was told of the marriage. But, poor Louise, her fate is even worse. She came to see me a short time ago, after one of her outbreaks, and her remorse and despair were something terrible to see. She told me that she knew the horrible craving would never be cured, though the treatment in the retreat where she had been staying did her good for a time, but for a time only. She had a dear little child ; but though her very soul seems bound up in him, she said she could not wish him to live to grow up—it would only mean a drunkard's fate. I tried to show how environment may overcome heredity ; but it was of no use, she is as perfectly hopeless for him as for herself. As for husband, he is no help to her, for he is one of those men who can keep constantly soaking and yet apparently retain their senses."

"And your voice has come back to you, and you can actually stand on a platform and address an audience. My wife a 'Woman's Rights' woman ! Well ! well !"

"You don't mind, Laurie ?" but she looked at him anxiously.

"Mind ! I am proud to think that you have such great gifts. A woman's song and speech are a wondrous power, and used as you are using them, a crown of glory."

"It was a dreadful trial the first time or two, standing up before a hall full of people. I had got used to the singing, but this was different. It was only a sense of duty

that made me determined to try. But now, you will help me, for you have learned to speak too at those London meetings. That last speech of yours, that I read in the paper you sent me, where you announced your discovery that alcohol is always a poison, never a food, created a sensation, and must work eventually a revolution in medical practice. Drinking among women is often due, as in the case of poor Louise, to a doctor prescribing it in the first case."

"To have you for my very own, to live and work together, it seems almost more than I can realize; and in South Australia, too, the most glorious land, I verily believe, on the face of the earth. Oh! if it were only free from the curse of drink."

"It will be freed," said Anne, her eyes luminous. "Do you remember what the lecturer said? 'One with God is a majority, and the ones are multiplying fast.' Men and women standing on equal ground side by side; the power of the drinking curse broken; a federated Australia; to what might it not lead?"

"To such an uplifting as the world has never seen," he answered. "The world of the future is to the total abstainers, and the country that adopts that platform first will lead the van of the world's progress."

The setting sun gilded the cathedral walls as they came near, and the solemn roll of the organ drew their feet towards the door.

"The organist is practising," said Anne. "Let us go in."

So they moved quietly into a corner; and both knelt down amid the flood of melody that rolled and billowed around. The grateful burden of both hearts was the same. "Thank God for a good man's love," whispered Anne. "Thank God for the best thing earth holds," breathed Laurie. "And may we be made worthy," was the impassioned prayer of both.

Presently Anne lifted her head and fixed her eyes on the beautiful painted window of the crucifixion. The glory of the sunset lights lit it up, and surrounded the central

figure with a halo that always reminded her, when she came in at this time, as she often did of an afternoon, of the effulgence that enveloped her father when she last beheld him.

Laurie had risen from his knees, and she pointed to the everlasting symbol of self-renunciation. Both young hearts in the first flush of their joy, remembering that the self-renunciation of the individual and the self-renunciation of a nation can alone lead to the highest good for both, consecrated themselves afresh to the service that should help usher in the coming of their Master's Kingdom.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MRS. JOHNSTONE'S WILL

"It is a funny thing that we two girls should have held out all this time, and then be engaged in the same month—you to Laurie, and I to Bob Norton. I thought you would never condescend to marry after taking to the platform, and all that strong-minded sort of stuff; it will be rather a come-down to mend your husband's socks and iron his shirts. Or if you did marry, I thought you would end by picking up some one that no one else would look at, a one-legged temperance brother, or a blind man with a dog who wanted a wife to keep him. You need not wrinkle your grammatical brow, nor turn up your analysis hunting nose; the man, I mean, not the dog. You have got mixed up with such a crew since you went in for philanthropy that it is a relief to my mind you have decided on so respectable a match," and Jessie shook her blonde head with mimic seriousness, and dug her trowel viciously under a big wire-weed that grew between her lettuces.

Anne, sitting under the pear tree, laughed, letting her hand toy dreamily with a snow-white fairy boat that had sailed from the bough above, and had fallen on the cambric handkerchief she was supposed to be hemstitching. Only supposed, however; for the past three weeks had seen active, energetic Anne transformed into a day dreamer, who constantly forgot what she was doing, and made grotesque mistakes that afforded food for much mirth and good-humoured rallying from Walter and Jessie.

Jessie put down her trowel, and exchanging her stooping posture for a sitting one, regarded her sister curiously.

"I suppose Laurie does satisfy your romantic notions,

though so far he has been so successful, and perhaps you, my lady, may find yourself playing second fiddle instead of first as you generally do. For Laurie is clever, very clever, there is no doubt of that."

Anne stuck her needle into her work and leaned back against the tree-trunk.

"When, long ago, I used to think about these things—love and marriage and all that—I used to say to myself, that I would never marry unless it were a man whom I would be willing to take if he had not a sixpence to his name, nor a friend in the world; and if he were in prison going to his death, and I knew that marrying him would cost me every friend I had. Unless I cared for him all that marriage would never be for me, and I think the same still.

Jessie stared wonderingly. "Well, it is a blessing there are not many idiots of that sort going about. A nice thing to be marrying a murderer with the noose dangling round his neck, and the hangman waiting for the wedding ceremony to be over, before he pulled the string, and then go back to spend your life in slaving for money to pay the debts the murderer had given you a list of before he walked on to the platform."

Both laughed at the picture conjured up.

"You know very well that is not what I meant. He must be of a noble——"

"Family, exactly. I see, a foreign count who had come to Australia for the good of his country might have served your turn, especially if he ran off to one of his donnas or senoras when he tired of you. Um! thank goodness, I am not made after your pattern, no murderers or foreign noblemen for me. No, a good solid successful lawyer who can provide me with plenty of beef and plum pudding will satisfy my soul's yearning. No high falutin' creature on a pedestal, but a steady-going man who will never look at another woman but his wife."

"Robert is a good fellow, Jessie, and I am glad you value him properly."

"I am giving evidence of it. We shall jog along comfortably and if we have none of your raptures, we shall at any rate have none of your dumps. He is a dear old chap, but slow. I had almost to tell him to kiss me the first time, though there has been a marked improvement since."

"Jessie!" and Anne took up his work.

"Why those tones of horror? Fact, I assure you." With mischief sparkling in her eyes, she watched her sister for a few minutes then said—

"How did you feel when Laurie gave you the very first kiss?"

Anne flushed deeply, and hesitated, then replied seriously, without looking up—

"As if it were a sacrifice, as if I were giving away what I could never recall."

Jessie clapped her hands delightedly. "There now, I knew you would be different in your ideas about it from any one else. You are the queerest girl! But, like Bob, I suppose, you improved as time went on, and reconciled yourself to the sacrifice with becoming resignation?"

The curve of her sister's lips was the only answer.

Jessie hugged her knees reflectively. "Well this time next year I suppose we shall be staid married women—you across the lane in the Mitchells' old house; when it is renovated it will do very well for a start," waving her hand patronizingly towards what in their childhood they looked on as a mansion, "I in Melbourne presiding over Bob's establishment; while Mother and Mr. Marshall and Walter keep together here. Laurie, who has an infatuated idea of your worth and dignity, talks of building a new house for you by and by, but I don't believe that will ever come to pass. You will both encourage all the people who haven't a penny to bless themselves with to go to him for advice and medicine gratis, and be afraid to send in your bills to folks who do happen to have any money for fear of hurting their feelings."

Anne still smiled amusedly, without speaking.

"Now Bob and I are going on a different tack altogether. We shall make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, provided he pays us heavy fees, and set the dogs on all paupers who dare to poke their noses inside our gates. Then I shall make Bob, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, for he is too slow to set about it himself. In time there will be a Lord Mayor, and we shall work the oracle until Sir Robert Norton and his lady rule the Mansion House. Perhaps we may send you and Laurie a card to our 'At Homes' when there is no one in particular coming; that is if you have not got too disgracefully out at elbows by then. I suppose there is no chance of Laurie making it up with Mrs. Johnstone, so that she would leave him her money?"

"No chance of the first, I fear. You know how she refused to see him when he called, and returned unopened the letter he left, but he would not take her money even if she wanted to leave it to him."

"More donkey he. Why he could spend it on his fads and yours. Do you suppose there is a single church in South Australia that would refuse it? Not they. Why heaps of the church walls have whisky bottles and beer barrels built into them, and yet Laurie sets himself above the churches. But it is of no use talking to people who are determined to be beggars. I have done my duty by remonstrating at any rate."

"You do not mean what you are saying, Jessie."

She gave a little moue. "Well, perhaps not quite. That is the worst of inheriting such straight-laced traditions. They have a knack of popping up and spoiling the fun just when you don't want them to. It doesn't matter to you, you don't want any fun; you are always looking up at the stars, but any clown on stilts capering before me can shut out my view of the celestial bodies. Don't I know you are miles above me, you serious old creature? But you must make allowance for my shallower pate."

Zeke came along, carrying his rake. ~

"Where are you going, Ezekiel?" asked his mistress

sharply. She knew quite well whither he was bound, and also that he hated being called Ezekiel.

"I got ter split some wood, an' then I'm goin' ter vote, Miss Jessie."

"Of course you will vote for Green, who supports women's suffrage?"

"No, miss, I won't. I'm goin' ter vote fer Smith. 'E says evry workin' man ull git a cow an' a hacre of land wen 'e gits in; an' I wants a cow an' a hacre; an' women done knaw nothin' of polantics, they hain't got the 'ead for them; so I hain't fer givin 'em a vote."

"No, of course, you for instance are better qualified to vote than my sister here, who has written a book on politics that the Government have placed in the State Schools. Politics means some one to give you a cow and a piece of land, instead of your earning it yourself," answered Jessie with huge disdain, which was, however, wasted on Zeke.

"Mind you are not long, Ezekiel, for the lettuces must be tied up to-night."

"It all depen's on how things goes, Miss Jessie," and Zeke lounged away.

"Fancy that yahoo having a vote and neither you nor I considered eligible," said she disgustedly. "But I don't believe you care just now about votes or anything else; only just Laurie, Laurie."

She got up from the ground and pulled off her gloves.

"Meanwhile, considering the lofty position in store for me as lady mayoress receiving, um! royalty, I think that weeding lettuces to sell at one halfpenny per head—that is if the slugs leave me any to sell—is disgustingly low employment; and these gardening gloves are certainly not befitting my future rank; there are too many holes in them."

She rolled them up in a ball. "Here, Anne, catch. I will make them over to you. You will be glad of them when you are Mrs. Laurie, so put them by," and she aimed successfully at her sister's nose.

"Let us go inside; mother must have finished her letters, and is no doubt dying to talk over the exciting topic of the day. It is such a lovely afternoon; we will have tea outside in the garden. Wait a minute, there are a few ripe strawberries, I must gather them. Bob and I will eat them while you and Laurie are making eyes at each other and sentimentalizing. We will munch while you sigh."

Anne made a feint of boxing her ears. "Don't count on eating my share; it is a matter of principle with me not to encourage greediness."

Jessie skipped off to the strawberry bed, while the other, after folding her work, stood looking up with worshipping eyes at the great pear tree, one mass of snow-white blossom that filled the air with its sweet, salty scent. "What a glorious world! And what a glorious thing life is!"

Zeke's voice came from the yard, where he was talking with Polly the maid.

"Yer got a very 'ard face, Miss Polly."

"Yes, and yours would make a good rasp to sharpen it on."

"Yer give me a lot snubbery, Miss Polly."

Back came Jessie with a big green leaf full of scarlet berries.

"While Bob eats his berries I shall remind him of your first visit to the Summit, and how you boxed his ears for trying to kiss you. He must have thought that sort of thing ran in the family and so was afraid to try me, until I undeceived him. He would never have asked me to marry him if he could have got you."

"Nonsense, Jessie, you talk at random."

"No nonsense at all, but I am not a bit jealous, for now he thinks what a prize he has got and is ready to go down on his bended knees to return thanks for escaping from such a spitfire as you. Besides," she added seriously, a pensive look stealing into her arch face, "I would not have taken him a few years ago at any price, if he had asked me, and so should have lost the dearest fellow in the world,

because at that time I had not sense enough to appreciate his worth. So after all I am bound to be thankful to you for saving him for me, and preventing any one else snapping him up."

The sound of cab wheels driving up to their door made them turn round.

"Why, Anne! There is Laurie getting out of the cab. He is an hour before time. I shall tell him about the murderers and foreign noblemen he cut out."

But her gay badinage was stilled when she saw Laurie's face as he met Anne.

"Grandmother is dying," he said. "She has sent for me, and wishes you to come also. Will you? I have a cab waiting."

"Of course. I can be ready in five minutes." Only waiting to press her lover's hand and look with sympathizing eyes into his, she hastened indoors. Jessie went to the kitchen and brought some tea which the two drank hurriedly, and then were gone.

"How things change," she said to her mother disconsolately as they stood at the gate. "Here we were so happy and I thought we should have such fun at tea. And now, dying, and perhaps death comes in to interrupt."

"Ah, child," said her mother tenderly, "that is one of the laws of life—pleasure and pain alternately. Enjoy your pleasure while it is given to you, dear, but be ready to meet the other courageously when in turn he seeks you out."

As they drove along Laurie gave Anne Keziah's note to read.

"You granmar is dyin an' wans you an' Miss Cassels to kum as is goin' to murre yu, 'er send fer i to nuse she, kum to wunse.

"You ole fren' Keziah."

After his engagement to Anne, Laurie had paid Keziah a visit and she expressed her intention of going the next day to see Mrs. Johnstone.

“ ‘Er is wuss that hiver in ‘er timper, and as flyjam ; but I be not a goin’ ter let that put hoff lettin’ ‘er know yer be goin’ ter git spliced ter Miss Cassels. Dear ! dear ! it do be queer ter think yer be goin’ ter ‘ave a kitchun of yer own, arter the way yer used ter run arter me wen I wer a cookin’, an’ yer was a little un an’ axe for a sup o’ gravy bread in ther pan. Another time yer took hoff one on yer shoes an’ put un hinther’ oven, wen me back wur turnt a gittin’ of ther bakin’ dish with ther jint an taters in it hoff ther table ; an’ I clapped ther door to, an’ never noticed yer bare little foot, tills I smels summat burnin’ wot warn’t beef or taters. Law ! it wor the Lord’s massy yer worn’t a burnt ter death. Dear ! dear ! it do be funny.”

That was three weeks ago, and Keziah had told him that Mrs. Johnstone had been ill in bed when she called ; but had received her and listened to Keziah’s communication, making no comment on it.

“ I didn’t like ‘er bein’ so quiet ; it didn’t seem natral like, so I telt ‘er as soon as yer wor sot hup fer a doctor yer’d do a bit o’ preachin’ mayhap, aboot ther liquor trade, wen yer ‘ad time, like Miss Cassels does. I thought it ‘ud a roased ‘er hup a bit maybe, but it didn’t, ‘er jist sed nought. But wen I was a shakin’ ‘ans goin’ away, she seys, lookin’ at me sharp like—

“ ‘There be a lot o’ crack brains in this world, Keziah,’ and then pit me ‘and down, an’ shut ‘er heyes, an’ turned round as ef ‘er wor sleepy. So I coomed away. It bain’t no use, Laurie, ‘er worn’t niver forgie yer.”

The cab-driver’s horses were good ones, and he had been told to travel as speedily as possible, so he took a series of short cuts through the back streets. In a low part of Adelaide, they passed a public-house outside whose doors stood a group of men and women, all more or less intoxicated. Among the latter Anne caught sight of two faces that were known to her, though she had not seen either of them for years. They were those of the little Brown girl and Emma. The first was gaily dressed, and had a great bruise on her forehead, Emma’s clothes were torn and

dirty and her face had grown bloated, but the malevolent fire in her eyes was the same as of old when she acted as housemaid to Mrs. Mitchell.

Anne shuddered and grew pale, and Laurie's brow became stern as turning to seek the cause of her emotion the group on the footpath crossed his view ; for he, too, remembered the little face that had looked out from among its tangled curls, the red lips wet with the froth from the beer jug.

On arrival at Mrs. Johnstone's house, the door was opened before they had time to knock as if watch had been kept for them. Both noted the rich furniture of the wide hall and stairs, the soft carpets and silken hangings, the white statuary gleaming among ferns and palms ; the pictures and great Indian jars. But while Anne's artistic glances were of admiration, Laurie's were of loathing. The seal of the ruined face with its black bruised forehead was over all ; he had lived within hell's portals and knew, while Anne had only stood outside the gates.

The great bedroom was filled with shadows, through which the red coals in the grate glowed, but it could be seen that the same luxury prevailed. The worn withered face on the lace frilled pillows was turned towards the door ; but the eyes seemed the only living part of it, the rest was set like a mask. When Laurie, grasping Keziah's hand as he passed, stood beside the bed and stooped down, the longing, beseeching eyes looked into his for a moment, and then as his lips touched hers, closed and a quiver passed over her face.

"Dear gran," he said tenderly, kissing her a second time.

Then she looked at him again. "You don't hate me ?" she whispered faintly.

"How could you think such a thing, dear ?" he answered soothingly, sitting on the bed, and taking both her hands in his. "If you had read my letters, you would have known differently ; have known that my love has never faltered. But see, here is your granddaughter that is to

be," for he knew it was better to relax the tension of feeling, and Anne, at his gesture, came forward and spoke gently.

Then Laurie, affecting a professional air, inquired of Keziah when his grandmother next took her medicine, and finding it was now nearly time, made Anne measure out and bring it.

She lay back not speaking, only holding Laurie's hand and listening while he and Keziah and Anne, spoke a word or two now and then. In a little while she fell into a slumber, and for two hours they sat silently, afraid to make the slightest sound that might disturb her.

The rose-coloured lamp on the landing gave sufficient light through the open door for the watchers to see when she awoke. Half wonderingly, she looked from one to the other, then said to Laurie, who again held her hand—

"It is not a dream then, you have come back to me, my boy. Oh! Laurie, the dreadful, dreadful loneliness of all these years."

Her cry pierced his heart. "Never mind, dear gran, it is over now. You have had a good sleep; and you must take a little of the beef tea that Keziah is bringing you."

"I want to talk to you first while I am able"—her voice was stronger and more distinct—"or I may slip away before I have said what I want."

"No, gran, the medicine and the beef tea first. I am a doctor, you must remember, and I can assure you there is no immediate hurry to talk. Your pulse is stronger than it was before your sleep, and you are better."

"As obstinate as ever," and she gave a little smile, but submitted.

Then, when the beef tea was swallowed, she said that as he had told her there was plenty of time, he and Anne must go and take some refreshment, and her old imperiousness flashed up when they attempted to tell her that they did not need it.

"Go at once. I want half an hour to myself to collect my thoughts," and they saw it was better to obey her,

When they returned she was propped up on a pile of down, looking more life-like and almost cheerful. She motioned them to sit close beside the bed.

"Keziah can stay." She spoke clearly and distinctly. "I don't mind her hearing," and Keziah took her place in a great easy chair.

"I suppose you think," she said, turning to Laurie, "that I was a bit extravagant in building this fine house and furnishing it; but I wanted to let folks see what the old public-house keeper could do. I got all the furniture from England—a new sort they call Morris furniture. I had it in my mind, too, that you would be sorry to have lost it, if ever you came to see it, and besides I really could well afford the outlay; those shares in gold mines brought me in a fortune without anything else; those I bought just before you left for a mere song, from a man who was knocking down his cheque. He died before they were worth anything or I would have given him part."

She paused a minute for breath.

"You didn't know what you lost, when you went as a farm hand. Don't you think you were foolish?"

But Laurie merely shook his head, smiling the while, for he dreaded the reference to the past might agitate her.

She took up a little crimson velvet bag, that lay on the bed in front, close to her hand, and drew from it a thick folded document.

"My last Will and Testament. By it everything is left to you and Miss Cassels equally. Stop——" as Laurie moved hastily. "It was executed a fortnight ago; but before that I had sold out all my interest in the brewery and public-houses; for I thought you would very likely still hold to your nonsensical notions. The money is re-invested in bank and tram and railway shares, but the great bulk of my fortune has been for years in land and mining properties."

"Grandmother, as a sign of your goodness in forgiving me all the worry I have caused you, I am most grateful; but I cannot," his voice broke. "Dearest old gran, it

is best to say it at once ; it is useless to ask me, I cannot accept."

"And you ? " she inquired with unmoved face, turning to Anne.

"Laurie's wishes are mine, dear Mrs. Johnstone. I thank you from my heart, but it cannot be."

"Think well before you finally decide." She turned her eyes again on Laurie. "You could be married at once, instead of waiting. You could live in this house, or build another, or half a dozen for that matter. You could travel, you could have a yacht, you would have no anxiety about providing for sickness or old age. Miss Cassels is fond of art, I have heard ; you could take her to Italy or anywhere else you like. There is no condition as to how to use the money ; you could spend it on your pet fads."

But still they refused, gently, gratefully, but decidedly.

"Very well. If it cannot be, it cannot be. I was half prepared for it." She held out the paper to Anne. "Go and put it on the coals there." And Anne, after one glance at Laurie, obediently went over to the fireplace and laid it as directed. In silence the four watched it blaze up, and crackle and then fall to ashes.

"So there goes all I have schemed and worked and slaved for, ever since you, Laurie, were born," she said in an exceeding bitter voice. And Laurie, feeling half guilty, looked remorsefully at her with lips and nostrils quivering.

"Never mind, dear lad," as she marked the signs of his grief. The old pet name made his heart leap. "Never mind. Perhaps you are right after all ; and when we meet again by and by, it may be the better for us both, that you would not bend to my will."

He brought her medicine again.

"It is good temperance drink. The doctor stopped my port wine, so at the last, you see, I have become teetotal," she said before drinking.

"Rest now, dear gran, and try to get a little sleep."

"Not yet, dear lad ? Plenty of time by and by. I thought perhaps"—and she sighed—"that experience in

the world would give you more sense of the value of money. It was you," she said to Anne, "you and your family who put such ideas into his head; so it would be right for you to share his poverty, for he will never be a rich man."

She regarded Anne intently a moment, then added—"But I suppose you won't mind that; you are as much a young fool as he."

She saw the glance of deepest love and confidence that passed between them, and a pang of infinite longing for what had never fallen to her lot shot through her inmost soul. With another and deeper sigh, she took up the crimson bag again and drew another paper from it.

"As I said, I was partly prepared for your foolery, so I thought I would have a little foolery of my own. Here is another will, a little joke, though joking has not been much in my line, goodness knows. In this I leave the whole of my goods and chattels, with the exception of a few bequests, to the teetotallers to be used for the furthering of the means to suppress the drink traffic. Don't you think that a good joke? The money made in a public-house used to kill public-houses."

For a minute there was absolute silence that made audible the sound of quickened breathing and the crackling of the fire on the hearth. Laurie looked doubtfully at her; then seeing she was truly in earnest, his face kindled with exultation.

"Grandmother, if you have really done this you have done a splendid thing. I have often dreamed of something of the sort, but never expected to see it come to pass."

"You don't think they will be as unco guid as yourself then, and refuse to take money made by beer selling?"

"The cases are not similar. It is a matter of personal interest in the one; in the other it will minister to the well-being of the people, rendering back what has been taken from them."

"You might have used it for the people yourself, but we won't go into that now. There is one thing you must do for me though. You and Miss Cassels must be among

my trustees to see to the carryng out of my intentions. It will not be much of a tax on you for some years, and by that time you will have established yourself in your profession. Besides, if I understand aright, you intend to work actively for the teetotallers, so this will just play into your hands. Promise me."

"Willingly, joyfully, dear Gran ; and I think I can promise for Anne too." He looked across at her.

"Most gladly."

"Very well. Now it is all settled. Take it," and she handed the will to him. "We won't talk any more about it. Come, tell me of yourself, dear lad ; what you have been doing and are going to do."

CHAPTER XXIX

GROWING NEARER THE LIGHT

THE joy of having her grandson with her, and being reconciled to him, wrought a partial recovery, and to the surprise of the doctors who had attended her, Mrs. Johnstone lived several months. Anne stayed with her most of the time ; and the stern old woman grew quite fond of Laurie's betrothed wife. They had many long talks together, and though she did not allude much to the past, Anne gathered from broken words and hints how dreadful had been the self-inflicted suffering involved in the breach with her grandson, and how strong was the pride and determination that had kept it up.

She was curious to know all the plans of the prohibitionist party, as it was beginning to be called, and listened with interest to everything touching on the subject, often with something of her old scorn, but often also with what seemed sympathetic interest.

"You will never do away with the drink trade, until you provide attractions that can compete with the comfortable public-house bar and parlour. Nearly all the temperance hotels and coffee saloons that I have heard of are dingy ill-kept places. I could have run one of them and made it pay, I know ; though not like the sale of drink does of course, but still made a good living. But you would want everything fresh and smart ; bright lights and good fires in cold weather ; and new-looking furniture, glasses and cups shining ; above all good cookery, and well served.

"Then the drink itself ; why don't you compete more

with good beer and porter and wines that don't intoxicate ? With all the discoveries in chemistry, I believe it could be done. Start a blue ribbon brewery, put in an energetic, capable manager—all would depend on that—and make a name for your drinks, using advertisements and agents freely ; and offer substantial prizes for the best brands, and get the exhibition and show people to offer prizes."

At another time she said : " You people are too narrow and groovy in the way you set about things. You have your little petti-fogging papers that you just circulate among yourselves ; the outside public never buy them, and know nothing of what you are doing. You would be more successful if you spent the money in advertising a column in the dailies once or twice a week, putting in all that science and experience can say on your side ; and a weekly list of the murders, suicides, assaults, accidents, lives lost and families ruined through drink. Most of the papers won't put it in on their own account ; they are too much afraid of losing the custom of the brewers and publicans ; but pay them, and they will do it fast enough, and, besides, begin to take thought of whether it is not to their interest to consider what their new clients approve.

" You look in wonder at me, who was for the best part of my life a publican ; but I tell you no one knows the misery drink causes as well as those who sell it, except, of course, those who are ruined by it. I always thought drunkenness horrible in a way, though you get used to it, seeing it continually about you, and when it puts money in your pocket. But since I have been away from the public-house I can see more and more it is a curse ; but I doubt whether you will ever get a whole people, or the most part of one, to give it up ; folks don't like giving up their pleasures for others.

" I think if I were starting out in life again, knowing what I know now, I would join you ; but that is the worst of it, a body can't begin again, and we don't seem to be able to know and understand things till it is too late."

Another time she said : " If the churches had done their duty when I was young I might have gone on a different

tack. But, bless you, we never used to hear a word from them against drink ; instead the clergymen thought nothing of coming into the bar to get a glass or two ; but every now and then, one of them ended up as a drunkard ; so somehow you got to think that drunkenness was part and parcel of things, and not to be helped. And they were not like Laurie, they didn't refuse a publican's money, not they ; they were always glad to get my subscriptions for their stipends as well as for other things. Why a good bit of the money I made in drink went to help build the cathedral, and they sent me a most polite letter, thanking me for my generous gift, and put a paragraph in the paper about it.

"Why !" she smiled sarcastically, "there are churches that are really publicans themselves, for they own the buildings and take the rent for them : plenty of such churches in the old country and some in this too. In others there are heaps of church members who take communion, while they buy brewery shares, and then talk with contempt of 'low publicans.' Low publicans, indeed !" Her eyes glowed angrily. "They are not a bit higher themselves."

Ordinarily she was fairly cheerful, but occasionally deep fits of melancholy took possession of her. On one of these occasions she asked Laurie, when they were alone, if he knew how Harry was getting on in gaol.

He told her that the man's behaviour since his incarceration had been most exemplary, and that in consequence his sentence would be considerably shortened.

"Ah ! dear. How often, since I have been lying here, have I thought of the poor wretch. You will do something for him when he comes out ? No need to ask you that. I know, dear lad, that you cannot help looking down on me in a sort of way. No, don't worry, you cannot help it ; but there were great excuses for me, great excuses ; and I often did try to do some good to make up partly for some of the misery I saw that drink had made. I used to often help the wives and children of the drunkards before you

left me, as you know, and talk to the young men when I saw them going too far ; and I even tried to save some of the miserable girls I saw going down to ruin. Surely that will be remembered for me ? Don't you think it will ? ”

“ I am certain, dear, that no good deed is lost.”

“ Do you remember the Rev. Mr. Wilson, who used to come into the bar so often. He was turned out of the church at last for being drunk at a communion service. I paid his passage to England and sent him money after.”

Then she told him of others she had sought out when she left the public-house.

“ There was old Daddy's wife. She, poor creature, worked as long as she could to keep body and soul together ; but she got ill, and old Daddy and her drunkard of a son often left her nearly starving ; and the destitute people wouldn't help, of course ; they said she had an able-bodied husband and son. When I found that out, I made her comfortable for the rest of her life, which wasn't long.”

She also told him of what she had tried to do for the little Brown girl.

“ I had her here as housemaid, when no one else would let her step inside the door. But it was of no use, she drank like a fish and couldn't give it up.”

“ Anne and I will try again, gran, and perhaps we may be able to succeed.”

“ It would be a load off my mind, dear lad, if I knew you would try.”

“ Give me a list of any you would like me to seek out,” and he brought pen and paper and wrote down the names.

In an extreme fit of sadness, when she was alone with Anne, she said : “ I will tell you what brought matters to a crisis at the public-house. Do you remember hearing of that swagman—the vile brute beast—and the little child of seven, who had strayed on to the Parklands ? ”

Anne bowed her head, shuddering.

“ The child was taken to the hospital and died ; the mother and father thanked God it did.”

She paused, with an exhausted look on her face, but of Anne's entreaties not to talk any more took no notice.

"Well, that wretch had been drinking in my bar off and on all the morning of the day it happened. He was not drunk, no, he could stand and walk all right; but whether he properly realized what he was doing is another thing. Anyhow I got out of the place the next week. It was too much for me, even," she said with a bitter smile.

She never mentioned her will after the first night. But once she told Anne that all she had striven for had ended in failure. And when Anne tried to comfort her by painting a picture of the immense help her wealth would give in the coming struggle to uplift the masses, she answered sadly:

"But that will be after I am gone; and it divided me from my boy all these years."

It was in Laurie's arms she passed away at last, while Anne and Keziah stood beside.

CHAPTER XXX

CONCLUSION

ROBERT NORTON and Jessie had been wedded over a year, and a small person in long robes ruled the Melbourne establishment, before Laurie and Anne became man and wife. They went to reside in the house across the lane, which had been renovated and made into a charming though not a costly home, for taste and order combined can produce beauty cheaply. Their married life together equalled all that they had hoped ; and Keziah used to say that “ Ter see them two young things together ” (for she never looked on Laurie as anything but a boy, even when his own sons were growing up) “ maks tears amost come’d in me heyes ; ’im be so wrapped hup in she, an’ ’er be so wrapped hup in ’e ; its amost like ter a bit hout o’ a book.”

Laurie built up a large practice ; but Jessie’s predictions as to his income came true, for he never made much money, and a good deal of what he did earn was spent in philanthropic schemes. His interest in the Queensland station and what his wife gained by her pen were often a welcome assistance to them.

As home responsibilities increased they did not leave Anne much time to devote to writing ; for when a woman rules a growing household well, her powers, be they ever so varied, find ample scope therein. Husband and children always came first ; but she often laughingly declared that as soon as their sons and daughters had grown up, and were off her hands, she would again enter the arena of reformatory labour. Meanwhile she did what she could ; and in particular, strove to carry out some of Mrs. Hall’s

ideas on the domestic help question, which still seem a long way from finding a satisfactory working basis that will alike suite mistress and maid, though there are many signs that law and order will in the end be evolved out of the long reign of chaos.

After Mrs. Johnstone's death they had sought out the little Brown girl ; but their mission was unsuccessful, for she resolutely refused to listen to either. During the second year of his marriage, when Laurie was one morning walking down the Magdalen ward of the Adelaide Hospital, in company with a brother physician who had asked him to attend a consultation, he saw again on a bed he was passing the dark eyes and tangled curls. The piteous eyes ! they made his heart contract ; and strong man as he was, a feeling of actual nausea for a moment overcame him.

He brought Anne the same afternoon, and together they ministered to the diseased mind and body, while life lasted, and afterwards walked behind all that was left to its final resting-place.

When Jessie married Mrs. Cassels let part of the garden, and Zeke passed into Laurie's service.

"I'd like ter tell yer, sir," he said when Laurie was settling preliminaries with him, "as I durn't like crysamimums."

"Oh ! don't you ; but I suppose you can grow them ?"

"Oh, yes, but I durn't like um."

"That makes no difference as long as you can grow them."

Zeke scratched his head, and thought a minute. Another thing, sir, I durn't like me flowers picked."

"How do you mean ?"

"Well, sir, er knows, sir, I takes a hinterest in ther flowers, an' I durn't like um bein' picked."

"It is not likely I shall want to pick many. But, ah !— well you see, by and by I shall have a wife, and if she wants to pick flowers.— Well, you see, she will be my wife, but you will be my gardener, you understand."

"Oh ! yes, sir. I understands ; women is all alike, wantin' thin's. There wus Miss Jessie couldn't leave nothin' in

ther garding, wippin' it hoff allers. But I didn't mean that, sir, I meaned visitors ; they sometimes comes an' pulls great bunches of flowers ; so the hother gardingers tells me."

"Ah ! yes, I see. The best way to prevent such a catastrophe would be to gather flowers for the visitors yourself."

Zeke held on to the end of his nose in meditation. Then delivered himself. "I can't abear pussons who haint no tack."

"And you think I am lacking in that characteristic, Zeke ?"

"Oh ! lor, no, sir," answered Zeke horrified. "I'm thinkin' of ther pussons who pulls yer flowers."

After he was installed in office he used to talk very learnedly about gardening matters to Laurie.

"I just bin puttin' some manoor roun' them flowers there. I dunno ther right way ter say it, but I calls um Ben steamers, an' I wouldn't like um touched. Me memry haint good, an' I haint sure um are Ben steamers ; but I call um that."

"I fancy they are named pentstemons. Why don't you get a wife to jog your memory now you haven't got Miss Jessie to do it for you ?" said Laurie jokingly.

But Zeke answered in his usual stolid manner.

"Very good, sir, there haint no diffleculty about *that*."

"But," asked Laurie, somewhat taken aback, "have you got any one in view ?"

"Well, no, not erzackly, sir. But I knaws a gal as would 'ave me, I thinks. She's got a wooden leg."

"I should not start at marriage too hastily."

"I won't be 'asty, sir. I bin thinkin' ef hit fer 'ears an' 'ears."

Laurie was much amused, but gave Zeke's matrimonial prospects no further thought, being too much engrossed by his own plans in that line, until one day he stopped to speak to Zeke, who was digging potatoes energetically.

"I did that er as yer tole me, sir."

"What, tied up the creepers ?"

"No, sir. I got married, sir, this morning."

"You don't mean it! To the wooden-legged lady?" asked Laurie amazed.

"Yes, sir, but it's only one leg as is wooden." And Zeke resumed his digging.

When his master suggested his taking a holiday, he said he was too busy. "The taters muss be tended to."

Mrs. Zeke possessed a temper and a passion for arguing.

"How are you this morning, Zeke?" asked Laurie about three months after the wedding.

"Oh! thanky, sir, dodgin' about like; but my missus are allers crackin'. She cracks as she knaws more 'an I does about everything; even aboot ther flowers she cracks." Zeke leaned on his spade and looked mournfully at Laurie.

"Well, you must crack that you know more than she does," advised his master.

"It haint no use, sir, fer she knaws more 'an I does. I'd no idee married life was like this, sir, or I'd a weathered it hout an' never got married."

"But if you are ill, Zeke, you will find the benefit of having a wife. No one sticks to you when you are ill or in trouble like your wife."

"Well, you see, sir, we've a claim on um."

"A wife will do more for you when you are sick than any one else," pursued Laurie.

"It's their dooty, sir. But it haint their dooty to keep crackin' as they knaws more of flowers than them as does. If I was you, sir, I'd weather it hout." And Zeke looked significantly.

However, when several small people came to take up Mrs. Zeke's time, there was less to spare for "crackin'," and consequently she and her husband jogged along more amiably.

In process of time various princes and princesses arrived in Jessie's home, and ousted, each in turn, the previous occupant of the Norton throne. Though devoted to her husband and children, Jessie did not lay aside her social

aims, in all of which she was highly successful. To prove this, it is only necessary to mention that just lately Sir Robert Norton and Lady Norton, Lord Mayor and Mayoress of Melbourne, have been entertaining royalty.

But the paupers and mendicants were also welcome within their gates ; and no one needing help ever appealed in vain to good-hearted Robert and his wife. In one thing they were considered singular by the *crème de la crème* of the city : no intoxicating liquor was used in their household ; for, though, as Jessie explained, neither of them were rabid on the point, yet they considered it better for themselves and their children and servants to keep out of harm's way ; and that being so, they could not retain it on the premises for their guests.

There was an old man who lived at their lodge gates, or rather he appeared old, for he was not really so. He was a sort of general factotum, assisting gardeners and coachmen, running errands for the cook, taking messages for his master and mistress, and above all playfellow and caretaker of the children, who adored him. None but their parents knew that the sad-faced, hollow-eyed, aged man, with his white hair and bowed figure, was a fratricide, and had served a long term of imprisonment in Her Majesty's jail.

Laurie and Anne would have liked to have had him with them, but their home was too near the scene of the terrible tragedy that had wrecked his life ; and Laurie as well as the jail doctor thought it would give Harry's mind a better chance of recovering something of its proper balance if he were sent away from the city that had nursed in its bosom the state of things which had brought about his crime.

The long fits of black melancholy that seized upon him at times could often be brought to an end by one of the children appealing to him for help ; and only once did they see anything about him to affright them. The brutal pastime of a pigeon match was going on some fields away from the suburban house where the Robert Nortons lived, and hundreds of helpless winged creatures, who had gladly

darted from their imprisoning cages into the fresh air and sunshine were struck and torn by the shots fired at them for amusement by creatures who claimed to be the apex of creation.

Scores of the poor things fell grievously wounded to crawl away and endure an agony of suffering before kind death ended their torture.

Harry was sitting making a chain of dandelions for a tiny mite of a girl sitting on his knees, while a circle of her brothers and sisters stood around watching, when something grey and scarlet fell at their feet. Harry looked down and saw the broken wing and torn side from which the red horror flowed, and an awful look overspread his face. Two of the frightened children ran in and called their mother ; she found him lying cold and pulseless on the earth holding to his breast a dead bird.

It was weeks before he recovered his proper reason, and always afterwards they feared that such another attack would cause him to end his days in the lunatic asylum. But it was ordered otherwise, and Harry went peacefully at last to meet the Judge who judges righteously and apportions blame only where it is deserved.

Walter obtained his degree at the Adelaide University, and then Laurie took him into partnership. Together with his mother and Mr. Marshall, he continued to occupy the white cottage, until a pretty little medical girl student who graduated at the same time as himself became his life partner ; and with her he set up housekeeping further down the terrace.

Mrs. Cassels' life flows placidly on, seeing her own strong independence of character reflected more or less in her children, and rejoicing in their success. On Christmas Day they and their families make a point of being with her ; and she looks forward to the gathering all the year before, for then she has Hugh beside her ; Hugh and his wife and children. For Hugh is, at last, a fairly prosperous man ; he married the only daughter of a well-to-do farmer : a silent young woman with a will of her own, who saw to

it that her property was firmly settled on herself before marriage, and who makes no protest when her husband holds forth on the superiority of his own sex over hers ; but who, all the same, keeps a firm hold on her own possessions and steadies down his desire to roam. They are happy up to the limit that their natures allow, and none can expect more than that.

Keziah and her husband are still prospering ; the phaeton and the ponies are an established fact ; and as all her step-children are well provided for, Keziah has set her mind on making her son a doctor. “ ‘E ’as a good strong ’and an’ harm ; an’ that ought ter be good fer cuttin’ people hup ; an’ yer maks money by it ; so I’d like ter send ’im ter the Universal. But Willum ’e says as ’ow e’ll ’ave ter go on ther lan’ ; so I dunno ’ow it’ll be.”

Catherine Muir made what Jessie calls the grand match of the old circle.

Sir Archibald Fraser, Baronet, a somewhat rugged, middle-aged bachelor, left his native heath to see with his own eyes if this new country of Australia was suitable for some of the Scotch crofters who were desirous of emigrating. While in Adelaide he sought out his distant kinsman, the John Marshall, at whose house he often used to spend his holidays when a schoolboy, and of whom and his gentle little wife he retained the warmest recollections. So that they might be near each other for the three months he proposed spending in South Australia, he boarded with Miss Muir, and became so charmed with the sonsy, capable woman of naturally refined nature and strong brain, that it ended in her becoming Lady Fraser and returning with him to assist in ruling over his ancestral home.

“ See, now,” Jessie would say, pulling her husband’s hair, “ if only I had waited, I might have been a baronet’s lady instead of wife to a mere knight ; for I should certainly have cut out Catherine. But there, I suppose I should have been booby enough to prefer you ; as if a few years need make any difference.”

And Robert with his quiet smile would answer, “ Quite

right, old lady, quite right; you would never have let me off, baronet or no baronet."

They go to the Summit very often in the summer, and Jessie and the children run wild there, to the huge delight of grandpapa and grandmamma Norton, and Uncle Alf, who had chosen the life of a farmer.

Laurie and his wife have, close by, the cottage of which Anne used to dream. The glory and beauty of the hills possess for her their ancient charm; and when the struggle of their strenuous life has over-wearied mind and body, she and Laurie find peace and rest on the mountain-top, alone together with nature and with God.

Miss Cassels died intestate, and her property was thrown into chancery, afterwards being divided among English relatives; though had Mr. Cassels lived, a portion of it would have fallen to him. His children were not so near of kin as some of those in England.

And Mr. Marshall still waits for the call that has not yet come. Like Laurie and Anne, he interests himself in every scheme that is calculated to raise and benefit his fellow man. He often spends his Sundays on the hill-side, or by the sea; but if he hears of one who is likely to shed any fresh light on the eternal verities of life and death, he goes to listen. He speaks to none of his friends of these things, save only with the exception of Anne. To her he has said that Tennyson's "In Memoriam" has been to him something of a gospel of hope. And once he added, "There are times when I can almost believe that perhaps there might be something in that vision of yours."

And so God goes on teaching His children in various ways. By prophet and evangelist and apostle, by philosophy and vision and poem, by loss and suffering, by joy and hope, according to the measure of receptivity with which He has sent each one into the world.

Mrs. Johnstone's will provided that six trustees should see to the carrying out of its provisions. They were Laurie, Anne, Mr. Marshall, Mrs. Hall, Mr. Gollan, and Julia Cohen.

Only a certain part of the income derivable from the

capital was to be used, until the Legislature had passed an Act which had been in contemplation for some time, giving into the hands of the people themselves, by means of local option, the right to close drink shops without compensation. Otherwise, she said, there would have been a danger of the money being wasted by ill-judged people urging unadvisedly the hastening of events. She said she thought the brewers and publicans should have a fair warning of several years ; and then, if they still persisted in carrying on a trade that might be suppressed at any moment, they must take the consequences like any other speculators. Even at the present time the licence only lasted for one year.

Meanwhile until that was done, the wealth she had left would go on accumulating ; but as soon as drinking bars could be closed by the deliberate vote of the people, the trustees would have full power to use it as they considered best. She wished it to be known, the will ended, that her dear nephew, Laurence Leigh, and his betrothed wife, Anne Cassels, had been offered jointly the whole of her fortune, and had refused it on the ground that gains made by the drink traffic had entered largely into its accumulation.

The Legislature at last passed the Act mentioned by Mrs. Johnstone, and the publicans had fifteen years' notice given them. When the time arrives, the trustees of the will will commence their campaign against the liquor traffic in earnest, and are even now organizing their forces for the struggle. Mrs. Hall proposes travelling to Australia to assist ; and she believes that her church is fast waking up to the need of action in this direction. She even hopes to see during her lifetime a temperance head of the Roman Catholic church, who would thus have an immensely increased power to subtract from the sum of human misery.

All over the world there is a great awakening movement in favour of suppressing the drink trade. Year by year the results have become so appalling that the most thoughtless are forced to look the question in the face. Shall intoxicating drink govern the civilized world, or the civil-

ized world govern intoxicating drink? During the past thirty years seven and a half millions of human beings have, in Europe alone, died of alcoholism, and in Great Britain at the present moment over a million children are being brought up in similar surroundings to those amid which the little Brown girl lived. Alcohol is ever the recruiting sergeant of prostitution. No woman of that class has ever been known to be a total abstainer; over and over again they have stated that without alcohol their frightful trade would be impossible.

The statistics of Life Insurance Societies for the past sixty years disclose startling evidence as to the detrimental effects of alcohol on the human body. Side by side have been kept tabulated returns of total abstainers and moderate drinkers, until now the fact is incontrovertible that the one has on the average three and a half more years expectation of life than the other; while the returns of Friendly Societies show that the health of the average total abstainer is far superior to that of the average moderate drinker. The Medical Faculty too, as a whole, take quite a different view of the value of alcohol, both in health and sickness, to that held by their brethren of half a century ago. Then it was the usual thing to prescribe it as a food and stimulant; now, on the contrary, it is declared to be a poison and depressant.

Those who would limit, those who would hand over the traffic to local control, and those who would entirely prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicants, are all striving in the same direction. The trustees of the will strongly advocate the latter course as a final goal, believing that no equivalent benefit can arise to counterbalance the crime, wretchedness and disease brought about from the consumption of alcohol. To this end, they say, we must educate, educate, educate, for only so can a whole people become strong enough in self-restraint to put from them this evil thing.

Adelaide is acknowledged to be the most beautiful city in Australia, and our Commonwealth perhaps the most free and truly prosperous country in the world. But side by

side, outspreading its growth and improvement, strides the country's curse. The malignant germs of vice have enormously multiplied, and the beautiful white city is in many respects like unto a whited sepulchre.

But the army of cleansing is closing up its ranks. The Protestant regiments have formed an alliance, the Catholics are likewise bestirring themselves, and the trustees of Mrs. Johnstone's estate feel that they are typical of the coming larger event. Catholic and Protestant of varying camps, together with Jew and Freethinker, find that they can all work together on social questions, and yet abate not one jot of their own individual religious convictions, carrying out the Great Father's Will—that all His children should belong to a common Brotherhood, vowed to war unto death against the forces of evil, and so hasten the coming on earth of the Kingdom of God.

During the long aeons of the past national morality has been slowly growing towards the Light. The time will come when it must spring into the free air and sunshine, sowing broadcast the seed which will fill the earth with its flower and fruit. Towards the hastening of that day, woman, hand in hand with man, goes forth.

THE END.



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